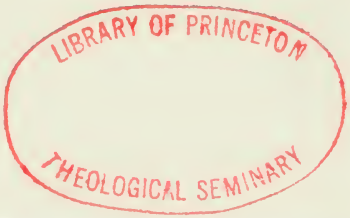

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Traill, Robert, 1642-1716
The Works of the late
Reverend Robert Traill, A.M.

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THE

WORKS

OF

The late REVEREND

ROBERT TRAILL, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel in LONDON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

The STEDFAST ADHERENCE to the PROFESSION of our FAITH recommended in twenty-one SERMONS on Heb. x. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

GLASGOW:

Printed and Sold by JOHN BRYCE, at his Shop, opposite Gibson's-wynd, SALT-MARKET.

MDCCLXXV.

THE RECOMMENDATION.

THE subjects treated upon in these sermons, have been always esteemed by well-grounded Christians, to have the greatest influence both upon our duty and comfort.

The promises of God, *are the matter of our* faith, *and ground of our* hope. Faith *in these precious promises, is that grace which* conveys *to us our interest in them, and* draws forth *the strength and sweetness of them.*

An honest open profession of that faith, *not only in words, or instituted solemnities of public worship, but in all holy conversation and godliness, is* the distinguishing mark *of the churches of Christ in the world.*

And a steady adherence *to that profession in times of temptation and great backsliding, is the believer's* unquestionable duty, interest, *and* honour.

These great points of spiritual and practical religion, you have here opened and urged, with that plainness, gravity, and good judgment, by which the late Reverend Mr TRAILL *has been well known in his former evangelical discourses. If any thing here shall seem less correct, it will easily be imputed to the usual disadvantages of posthumous productions.*

But surely great candour and tenderness will be thought due to such orphans, as are turned out into the world, destitute of those improvements, which they might have received from the care and cultivation of their worthy parents, if they had not been by death deprived of them.

In compliance with some of the author's particular friends, who were desirous to have these sermons made public, we would recommend them to the perusal of all such as are desirous to live more by faith upon the promises of God, and to be just and true to their holy profession. That the God of all grace would make them effectual to these good purposes, is the earnest prayer of

Their servants for Jesus sake,

WILL. TONGUE.
JOHN NESBIT.
MATT. CLARK.

A LETTER from the late Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY, to a Relation of the Author of the following Treatiſe.

SIR,

I Received your very valuable and no leſs acceptable preſent, ſome weeks ago. I ſhould have acknowledged the favour ſooner; but I choſe to ſtay till I had taſted the diſh you had ſet before me. And indeed I find it to be ſavoury meat, the true manna; food for the ſoul.

YOUR worthy relative was a workman that need not be aſhamed. He knew how, clearly to ſtate and ſolidly to eſtabliſh the faith of GOD's elect, and the doctrine according to godlineſs.——O! that my heart, and the heart of every reader, may be opened by the eternal SPIRIT, to receive the precious truths!

THE letter at the end of the firſt volume, is a judicious performance. It rightly divides the word of truth, and lays the line, with a maſterly hand between the preſumptuous Legaliſt, and the licentious Antinomian.——I am particularly pleaſed with the honourable teſtimony bore to thoſe two excellent books, Dr Owen's treatiſe on juſtification, and Mr Marſhall's goſpel-myſtery of ſanctification: Books fit to be recommended by ſo good a judge!

IF the Lord pleaſes to give Theron and Aſpaſio any acceptance in Scotland, I ſhall be ſincerely glad; but if he vouchſafes to make them, not only welcome, but uſeful viſitants, I ſhall exceedingly rejoice.——In caſe you ſhould think them calculated to promote the honour and further the goſpel of JESUS CHRIST, I hope you will favour them with your recommendation, and accompany them with your prayers; which will be a freſh inſtance of kindneſs to,

SIR,

Your obliged friend,

WESTON, July 8th, 1755.

and obedient Servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

THE STEDFAST ADHERENCE TO THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH,

Recommended in ſeveral SERMONS.

SERMON I.

HEBREWS x. 23.

Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, &c.

HAVING inſiſted at ſo great length upon the firſt exhortation of the apoſtle, concerning drawing near to God, which is built upon the foundations of the Chriſtian privileges, that the apoſtle named, and that we have ſpoke of, from the 19th, 20th, and 21ſt verſes; thoſe exhortations that remain are deduced from the ſame foundation: wherefore I thought fit not to let them paſs. The former exhortation was unto a duty with reſpect to God, drawing near to him, which the apoſtle requires to be performed in ſuch a manner, that all Chriſtians, and the beſt of them, muſt be learning to anſwer every day in their life, that they may come up more and more thereunto.

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The other two exhortations are with reſpect to ourſelves and others. The firſt is the 23d verſe, with reſpect to our own profeſſion; the other, in the 24th verſe, is with reſpect to our brethren and fellow-chriſtians.

The firſt of theſe exhortations, which is contained in this 23d verſe, plainly divides itſelf into the duty exhorted to, and the argument to enforce it. The duty is, *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering.* The argument to this duty is a ſtrong and a proper one, *He is faithful that hath promiſed.* Our faith ſhould always be built on God's promiſe; it is not the right faith if it be not ſo; and our faith on the promiſe ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of the promiſer; the ſtrength of our believing the promiſe, ſhould bear ſome proportion to the great faithfulneſs of the maker of it. Now, it is evident, that the apoſtle's argument is both pertinent and ſtrong: *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*, for God the promiſer does not waver in what he has ſaid.

I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe at this time, the duty he exhorts to. And you may ſee here, as I obſerved from the former exhortations, that the apoſtle, the penman of this bleſſed portion of ſcripture, puts in himſelf in this exhortation; *Let us*, ſays he, *draw near*, &c. *And let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering.*

In this duty exhorted to, there are three things to be conſidered.

1. What that is which is, as it were, the ſubject-matter of this duty; and that is, *the profeſſion of our faith;* ſo we tranſlate it. The words in the Greek, in the original, are certainly the *confeſſion of our hope.* What reaſon there hath been in the learned tranſlators for altering it, I do not know. However, it is no great matter; for profeſſion and confeſſion, faith and hope, are cloſely knit together; they are but ſeveral words expreſſing the ſame thing. *Confeſſion* and

and *profession* are frequently named one for another, and *faith* and *hope* are frequently named one for another in the word of God.

2. The *second* thing is the act, that the apostle craves about this profession, and we read it, *Let us hold it fast.* As if the apostle had said, The profession of your faith is very precious, keep it well; it will be attempted upon by your spiritual enemies, and they will be endeavouring to pluck it from you; hold it fast, keep it firm.

3. There is the manner of this duty the apostle craves about your profession: *Hold it fast*, says he, *without wavering*, without declining, without turning it to the one hand or to the other, but holding it steady and even. These are the heads that I would discourse upon from this text.

And to begin with the *first* of these, that are in the duty itself exhorted to, *the profession of our faith*, the apostle, you see here, plainly signifies, that it was made already, it was that they had; they had profession formerly. Now, says the apostle, *let us hold fast this profession of our faith.* This is the subject-matter of the exhortation, the profession of faith. And to make the way yet plainer, unto what I would observe and discourse from it, I would speak a little to the opening of these two.

1. *What is in this faith, that is the matter of this profession.*

2. *What is in the profession of our faith, or of this hope, which is as the form of it.*

1. What is in this faith or hope. There is none can understand what it is to hold fast faith and hope, till they know what faith and hope is.

First, For faith and hope, for I would still take them in both together, and shew, as we go along, the very small difference that is betwixt them; we find *faith*, in the word of God, taken for the doctrine of faith, for the truth of God, that is to be received, taken up, and embraced by faith: *Do we make void*

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the law through faith? ſays the apoſtle. *God forbid, yea, we eſtabliſh the law*, Rom. iii. 31. where the meaning plainly is, Do we make void the law by this doctrine of faith? No; by no means, God forbid. Divine truth is neceſſarily ſuppoſed to be the ground of all divine faith; if there were not ſuch a thing going before, as *Thus ſaith the Lord*, no amen of faith could ever follow.

Secondly, In the conſidering of that faith that we make the profeſſion of, we muſt conſider that God that it is to be believed on. Faith natively, faith ultimately, terminates on God: *That your faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Peter i. 21. where he joins them both together. There can be no believing where God is unknown, there is no believing in an unknown God. God cannot be known as the object of faith, but only as in Chriſt Jeſus. It is impoſſible that God can be graſped, may I ſo ſpeak, by the faith of a poor ſinner, but only as this God reveals himſelf to us in Chriſt Jeſus. There is no approaching to God by believing immediately: *but by him we believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* There is divine faithfulneſs for the ground of our faith; there is God himſelf in Chriſt Jeſus for the object of our faith.

Thirdly, In faith there is always an outgoing of the ſoul in deſire and expectation of ſome good from him. This is believing, this is hoping. Now, this is inſeparable from the former. Where-ever divine truth is divinely believed to be true, and God in Chriſt is embraced by the faith of a poor creature, this is unavoidable; immediately there ſprings ſome expectation and hope of getting good from him, and that is believing. All the difference betwixt faith and hope is this, that faith goes firſt unto God in Chriſt, on the ground of the promiſe for good; and hope goes forth to the ſame God, upon the ſame ground, in the expectation of that good that is believed. This is not

ſo

ſo diſtinctly owned by every believer; for there are ſome that have true faith in them, who, through the weakneſs of their faith, and manifold temptations, nip the expectations of faith from budding. But this is a violence done thereto. Where-ever a poor ſinner hath taken the warrant of God's promiſe, and has ſealed it with the poor weak amen of his faith, that this is true, and he is faithful that hath ſpoken it; how can he forbear to add, And therefore there will be a fulfilment, when the good word that is ſpoken will be accompliſhed, when the good thing ſpoken of will be given? The apoſtle Paul ſpeaking of his own faith, gives it two ſpecial words, Phil. i. 20. *According to my earneſt expectation and my hope*, (he made no doubt, but all things would do well with him), *that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but that with all boldneſs, as always, ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.* The word there, *earneſt expectation*, is the ſame word in the original and our tranſlation, with that which is uſed of the expectation of the whole creation towards the day of the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. It is an expreſſion borrowed from an intent looking out as it were, and ſtretching forth of the neck, in looking to ſee a friend coming, that will be very welcome when he comes. This is faith, divine truth known, God in Chriſt received, graſped, laid hold of by faith; expectations raiſed thereupon, that the good will come unto us. Though many poor believers do not own their expectations, yet ſuch expectations are there, and do diſcover themſelves ſufficiently.

II. The ſecond thing is, *What is this profeſſion of faith?* Certainly, profeſſion and confeſſion is a declaring of this expectation I have been ſpeaking of; it is a public declaring it one way or other. The apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch kind of confeſſion and profeſſion, Heb. xi. 13. They *confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*; they made an open public

profeſſion of it. Profeſſion of faith is made two ways; it is made either by word, or by deed.

Firſt, Profeſſion is made with words. This the apoſtle does expreſly limit to the tongue, Rom. x. 9, 10. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth* (the ſame word with profeſſion here in my text) *the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* Confeſſion or profeſſion by word is made ſeveral ways.

1. It is made unto God in prayer. All our prayers, and all our callings on the name of the Lord, are a confeſſion: all that we ſay to him is a profeſſion of our faith. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou art my God.* What great matter is that? Yes, it was a great word, that David's ſoul could ſay to the Lord, *Thou art my God.* There is a duty lying upon Chriſtians to profeſs their faith unto the Lord, to avow it before him. Our Lord will have a poor man do ſo. *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* Why, was Chriſt ignorant whether he believed or no? No; he that was the Son of God knew whether the blind man had faith or no; but our Lord will have it out of his own mouth; he will have him profeſs it, and avow it: as accordingly he did, *Lord I believe. And he worſhipped him.*

2. Profeſſion is made by the tongue. In that ſpecial caſe of confeſſion, when goſpel-truth is oppoſed, when it is made the ſtate of ſuffering, then it is that confeſſion is ſpecially called for. It is with reſpect to this that our Lord's ſevere word is, Matth. x. 32, 33. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven. But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

Secondly, The profeſſion of our faith is made by deed. A man that cannot ſpeak may make a profeſſion of his faith. He cannot make it by words, but he

he may make it otherwise; I acknowledge not so easy, for the tongue is man's glory.

1. The outward attending on the means of grace is a profession of faith. Whoever they be that give but their bodily presence unto prayer and preaching of the word of God, and other institutions of Christ's appointment, they profess their faith of the gospel. A great many are liars in so saying; for they profess what they have not, and God will judge them accordingly. There is more need to be afraid, than people commonly are aware of. It is the most dangerous employment that an unbeliever can be taken up in, to make a secure attendance on the means of faith, when the man knows in his own heart, that he neither hath faith, nor would have it.

2. People may and should make a profession of their faith in their conversations in their families. This is one part of Christian profession, that every one that has a family, that he is master or she is mistress of, are obliged to make profession of their faith there. The Christian conduct of a family is a very honourable way of professing faith. *I will behave myself wisely*, says David, *in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart*, Psalm ci. 2. Several good words he speaks there of his purpose of owning of God, and declaring his respect to him, by his conduct in his family.

3. People make a profession of their faith by joining to and embodying themselves with the church of Christ. If there were no more but twenty believers in a city, I am persuaded that within a little time these twenty believers would quickly scrape up acquaintance one with another, and would unite themselves in the profession of their faith. Shall we receive faith, this great gift, and the honour of so near a relation to God and Christ Jesus as faith brings us to, and shall we not own it? It is remarkable the apostle takes notice of this, 2 Cor. ix. 13. *They glorify God*, says he, *for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ.*

The word in the Greek is more emphatical; it is *for the ſubjection or ſtooping of your profeſſion to the goſpel of Chriſt*, and your acknowledgment of it. Pray what great ſubjection is there here? Is it ſo low a ſtooping for a man to make profeſſion of his faith, that it muſt be called a ſtooping? Is it any wonder that the apoſtle called it ſtooping to be ſubject to the goſpel, when he ſays, Rom. x. 3. that the proud ſelf-juſticiary will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God? And it is the ſame word with ſubjection in the other place.

4. People make a profeſſion of their faith by an holy converſation. A walk as it becometh the goſpel, is a profeſſion of our faith, an outward confeſſion of it. All manner of godly converſation, and the adorning of the goſpel of God our Saviour in all things, is what is required even of ſervants, Titus ii. 10. But, ſay you, what, will the goſpel be adorned, is there an ornament added as it were to the goſpel, by the faithfulneſs and obedience of a poor mean ſervant? Yes, ſays the Spirit of God, you are to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. We find it inſtructed in ſeveral very like things. There is the giving of charity to the relief of the ſaints: That is, ſays the apoſtle, *by the experiment of this miniſtration, they glorify God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel of Chriſt:* and you prove your ſubjection by your liberal diſtribution to your poor brethren. Nay, to bring the matter yet lower, and I cannot bring it much lower, and that is even in womens apparel: ſays the apoſtle, 1 Tim. ii. 9. *Likewiſe let women adorn themſelves, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array, but (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works.* Let the ornament of a Chriſtian that ſeeks to adorn the goſpel be good works, rather than the vanities of this world, that are utterly unbecoming the goſpel; that the goſpel never taught, and that it frequently rebukes; for theſe

theſe vanities always bring reproach upon it, and upon mens profeſſion too.

5. The laſt profeſſion of our faith is the laſt thing we can do; that is, dying in faith. After profeſſion, and adorning our profeſſion all manner of ways, as long as we live, in due time, when God calls us we are to make profeſſion of our faith in dying. There is a dying faith, as the apoſtle ſays of the old teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 13. *Theſe all died in faith.* They confeſſed themſelves, all their life long, to be ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth; and in the ſame faith that they profeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth, in the ſame faith they died, and went to heaven. This is the nobleſt of all; and if it be not only dying in faith, but dying for the faith, it is ſo much the more amiable. *The time of my departure is at hand*, ſays the apoſtle, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.* Well, had he no more to do with faith? No, but one bit. *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, &c. I will die in the expectation of the crown, I will have no more to do with faith. So Stephen, the firſt confeſſor, the firſt profeſſor of faith by his blood, Acts vii. 59. *And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.* "I have confeſſed thy name "before theſe enemies, and they are driving this ſoul "of mine out of my body; now, Lord, receive it; "I have believed on thee, I ſuffer for thy ſake, I "commit this expelled ſoul unto thy care and con-"duct; *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.*"

So much now for the explaining the matter of faith and profeſſion. The truth that I would ſpeak a little to, is this.

DOCT. *That whoever they be that have Chriſtian faith and hope in them, ſhould make a Chriſtian confeſſion or profeſſion of it,*

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It is implied in my text, that a profeſſion of their faith, or a confeſſion of their hope, was made, and the apoſtle exhorts them about the keeping of it. It is not, Let us therefore make profeſſion, we have done that already; but, Let us hold it faſt. When we firſt gave our name to the Lord, when we firſt left the Jewiſh religion, or Paganiſh idolatry, and turned to the true and living God and his Son Chriſt Jeſus, we then made profeſſion; now let us hold it faſt.

He lies to God and to the world, that makes profeſſion of faith, when he hath it not; he diſſembles with God and the world, that has it, and does not profeſs it. We find much ſpoken of this profeſſion in the word: Heb. iv. 14. *Let us hold faſt our profeſſion;* a word much to the ſame purpoſe with this. This I thought to have confirmed in a few things, and ſo have made ſome application. I ſhall only give a few at this time of the grounds upon which this truth ſtands, That all that have Chriſtian faith ſhould make a Chriſtian profeſſion of it.

Firſt, The honour of Chriſt calls for it, Chriſt's glory and honour. The truth of grace does moſt immediately tend unto the ſalvation of a ſinner; but the profeſſion of grace tends moſt immediately to the praiſe of Chriſt Jeſus. Now remember what ſevere words I named already: *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words*, ſays our Lord, *in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels*, Mark viii. 38. The glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is promoted by our profeſſing of him. Do you think that Jeſus Chriſt, and his ſaving truth, and his gracious work upon the heart, are matters to be aſhamed of? Is it not a great ſin whenever this is committed?

Secondly, The good of others calls for this. The truth of faith is profitable to us; the profeſſion of faith is profitable to others. Were it poſſible that all the godly could keep in all their grace, that none in

in the world could see it but God and themselves, none in all the world would be a whit the better for it. It is the displaying of grace and of the faith that God has given, that is the great means of promoting the reputation of the gospel, and convincing of the world: Therefore, says our Lord, *let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*, Matth. v. 16. In the very next chapter our Lord severely inveighs against the Pharisees, that managed their religious worship with a design only to be seen of men: that was all they craved, and their hypocrisy was discovered thereby. But our Lord himself craves this of his people, that their light should not only so shine as to direct their own ways, but so shine that others might see it, and be provoked thereby to glorify their Father which is in heaven. The apostle Peter speaks of a case, I am afraid the mean is seldom tried, and therefore it is no wonder that the effect is seldom found. The mean is a Christian conversation, the effect is conversion. It is the conversation of the wife for the gaining of the husband. Now, the apostle craves this, and hints a promise for it. You would think it strange, that the Christian and sober deportment of a poor woman at home may accomplish that work, that by the ordinary means of grace had been in vain attempted: *That if*, says the apostle, *any obey not the word*, &c. that is, it is possible sometimes that the Spirit and power of God may attend a gospel-like conversation, and make it do that which the gospel and ministerial dispensations have not done; *they may without the word be won*; not that there is any conversion without the word, but that there may be such measures of light and conviction, given by other means that God may bring in otherwise.

Thirdly, We find by this, that our Lord Jesus Christ has a great concern about our profession. Christ Jesus himself was the great professor: He was so great a professor of faith, that his wicked enemies reproached

ed him for it when he was upon the croſs, Matth. xxvii. 42. *He truſted on the Lord that he would deliver him,* Pſalm xxii. 8. The apoſtle calls him *the high prieſt of our profeſſion.* He made a profeſſion of his own, 1 Tim. vi. 13. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God, and before Jeſus Chriſt, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion.* He told them he was a King, and that he came into the world to ſet up his kingdom; but they greatly miſtook it. Chriſt might reign in this world, and all the kings of the world might ſit where they are. Chriſt is troubleſome to none, but them that trouble him, and he will be too hard for them. We find our Lord frequently upon this in exacting profeſſion, and none needed it leſs than he. When people came to him for healing, *What would you,* ſays he, *that I ſhould do unto you?* They tell him; and then he adds, *Believe ye that I am able?* Now, any man might ſay, If thou be able thou mayſt cure whether I believe or no; but our Lord will have it out of their own mouths. He comes to one man after he had wrought a cure; our Lord finds him out; but the man had confeſſed Chriſt honeſtly, he was a ſound believer, and he was caſt out of the wicked church of the Jews, John ix. Chriſt found him when they had caſt him out, and ſays to him, *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God? Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* ſays he. *And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. Lord, I believe,* ſays he, *And he worſhipped him.* When Peter is to be reſtored, our Lord will have it by a confeſſion: he had given one great confeſſion to Chriſt, *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God,* which our Lord praiſes him greatly for; but he had fallen foully when called to confeſs Chriſt in the high prieſt's hall. There was no excuſe for a man to deny that ever he had ſeen Chriſt Jeſus, or been in his company. Poor wretched creature! if Chriſt had left him, if Chriſt had ſaid, I do not know Peter, as Peter ſaid he is

not

not my master; if Christ had said, he is none of my disciples, what had become of him? Now our Lord is restoring him again, John xxi. our Lord asks him one question, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me;* and, *Lovest thou me?* &c. What wonder is it, that the man is grieved that he should come thrice upon him? *Ay, but,* says our Lord, *I will have thee say, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* This is nothing but a profession of his faith and love.

Lastly, Faith itself will work a profession in a manner, whether men will or no. It is impossible to keep the fire of faith without the smoke of profession, and it is impossible to smother this lamp. If God hath kindled this heavenly fire of faith, and of the hope of the gospel, in any of your hearts, it will break forth one way or other. They with whom you live will know it; your faith will break out sometimes in your tongue; and it will appear, for as modest, and secret, and bashful as the person is, that there is something of heavenly fire working in him. This now is the constant practice of all nations and all people; and the Christian is not to be exempted from this common necessity; every sort of people in the world make a profession of what their faith and hope is: *All people,* says the prophet, *will walk every one in the name of his god,* though they be false gods, *and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever,* Micah iv. 5. Shall a worshipper of Baal be more bold and confident in professing of an idol god, than Jehovah's worshippers? *We will walk in the name of the Lord our God;* we will go up and down, professing and declaring, in all prudent and fit ways, our respects to him. We have an observable word of Jephthah; and truly he was such an odd sort of man, that unless it were for Hebrews xi. and one or two good words in Judges xi. we should hardly own him a believer. One of the words is in verse 11. He *uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh:* that looks something like. He was called ex-

traordinarily to be the head of Iſrael for their recovery out of a diſtreſſed ſtate, and before he attempts the work, he acquaints God. The words that I ſpeak of, and bring to this purpoſe, are theſe, verſe 24. it is in his meſſage to the Ammonites, *Wilt not thou poſſeſs that which Chemoſh thy god giveth thee to poſſeſs? So whomſoever the Lord our God ſhall drive out from before us, them will we poſſeſs.* Now, here was a great profeſſion of the man's faith; "You poor blinded idolaters, that call upon your idols, and if you "have ſucceſs in your way, will praiſe your idols, "and keep that which they give you to poſſeſs: "*Shall not we keep that which the Lord our God giveth us to poſſeſs?*" And, ſays he, "Be it known to "you we will." Try all the world over, I ſay, wherever there is a form of religion, true or falſe, a profeſſion of it is always required. As far ſunk as the Antichriſtian ſtate is, yet when they admit infidels, and, according to their wickedneſs, when they drive Proteſtants to their communion, they crave ſomething of profeſſion of faith. But all theſe profeſſions are rather profeſſions of opinion. A great many, aſk them what religion they are of, they can tell you; aſk them the principles of religion, they can tell you them; there is one queſtion ſtill that a great many of our profeſſors are puzzled with; "Pray, what is "your faith?" theſe truths are the truths of God, but what truth is there in your faith of them? The apoſtle requires to *be ready always to give an anſwer to them that ſhall ask a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear.* How many of our profeſſors, (and we have a great multitude more than the goſpel is honoured by), how many of them are not able to give an account of the hope that is in them? Unleſs this religion be well founded in thy heart, it is none of thy religion; it is the religion only of thoſe that believe. But unleſs the divine truths revealed in the word, be ingrafted in thy heart by a true and lively faith in them and on them, they are not thy religion

ligion, they are only thy opinion. Take heed; this matter of profeſſion, and profeſſion of faith, is not ſo ſlight and eaſy a matter, as people imagine. There is a very great danger in folks profeſſing to have faith, when they have it not. We think there was great ſeverity in dealing with thoſe two poor people, Ananias and Sapphira, in Acts v. There was a cuſtom then, and ſpecial reaſon for it, that ſeveral rich folks, in the proſpect of the expected difficulties that were coming upon the church, ſold their land; two people, man and wife, agreed to ſell their land, and keep part of the price in caſe of neceſſity for their own relief. Here was but bare lying in this caſe. It is true, the apoſtle aggravates it, as it was lying to the Holy Ghoſt; and it may be, there was ſomething of a deſign to try the apoſtles. But this was an innocent thing to what it is for a poor creature to make a profeſſion of faith, when he knows he has it not. To make a profeſſion of that he has not, is to boaſt of a vain gift. The Lord is ſtrict in obſerving mens profeſſion; a little thing will go in God's ſight for a profeſſion: and accordingly he will deal with men that are not ſincere therein; but there is no true profeſſion but that which is ſound. A profeſſion that is of truth, is not only, that a man profeſſes to believe truth, but that he does truly believe that which he profeſſes: therefore in the creed, commonly called the apoſtles creed, the firſt word in it, and which is the greateſt myſtery in it, is, "I believe in God, I "believe that there is a God; and I believe in," *&c.* Ay, but the main thing in thy creed is the firſt word, "I believe this." What conviction hath the Spirit of God made upon thy conſcience of divine truth to enforce this belief? For ſaving faith is nothing elſe but the mark which a divine impreſſion of divine truth hath made upon a man's heart.

SERMON II.

HEBREWS x. 23.

Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, &c.

I SHALL now proceed to make ſome practical improvement of what has been delivered in the former diſcourſe.

APPLICATION.

Firſt, then, we ſee what a Chriſtian profeſſion is; it is a profeſſion of faith. This is the name given to it in my text. In Heb. iv. 14. it is only called *our profeſſion*; ſometimes without profeſſion, it is called *our faith*, *our confidence*, verſe 35. *Caſt not away therefore your confidence*, &c. To a Chriſtian profeſſion of faith, there are two things required: 1. That it be true. 2. That it be viſible. 1. That it be true; that is, that not only it be a profeſſion of divine truth, but that it be a profeſſion of a true faith that men have in the truth. If people profeſs error inſtead of truth, they take God's name in vain; if they profeſs they have faith when they have it not, they lie againſt God and themſelves too. Profeſſion muſt be ſound and true; a man muſt profeſs what he hath, and no more. 2. Chriſtian profeſſion muſt be viſible. Profeſſion is mainly for others, as faith in the reality of it is mainly for ourſelves; the apoſtle therefore, when he is ſpeaking of the great profeſſion of the faith of the patriarchs, ſaith, Heb. xi. 13, 14. They *confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*. And *they that ſay ſuch things, declare plainly that they ſeek a country*, &c. All who had known Abraham, and

and Iſaac, and Jacob, who ſaw their way of living, who beheld their way of not mixing with the reſt of the nations, who beheld their faith and hope; theſe might have ſeen plainly, theſe were men for another world than this. There can be no profeſſion unleſs it be viſible. This is ſo general and well known a thing, that a viſible credible profeſſion of Chriſtianity is that only that deſerves this name.

Secondly, We ſee hence, what reaſon and ground miniſters and churches have to call for and require a confeſſion of mens faith and hope. The apoſtle ſpeaks of it here, as a thing that had paſſed all theſe believing Hebrews. He reckons that all of them who had faith, had one way or other made a profeſſion of it. Miniſters themſelves are or ſhould be eminent profeſſors. Indeed their profeſſion is very public; every time they preach, they profeſs. The apoſtle takes notice of this, 1 Tim. vi. 12. Thou *haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes;* and every time Timothy preached faith, and called others to the hope of eternal life, he did thereby witneſs to his own faith in ſo doing. Churches are ſocieties appointed by Jeſus Chriſt, wherein his name is to be held forth in the world; and there is high reaſon, that all who deſire to join with them in partaking of goſpel-privileges, ſhould make to them a profeſſion of their faith. Notwithſtanding all the corruption that is this day in the world, (for I chuſe rather to call it the world than the church), yet there is ſomething of this remaining in all that pretend to the name of a church; only, that they account their profeſſion is moſt wofully miſtaken. There are a great many who reckon it profeſſion enough, if people be born in a land where Chriſtianity is the common and eſtabliſhed profeſſion. Thus it is in the Antichriſtian kingdom generally. Some reckon, that their outward attendance on ordinances, and outward attendance upon the eſtabliſhed religion, is enough to get men the name of profeſſors; it may do ſo, but this is ſtill ſhort of a profeſſion

of

of faith. Sometimes there is aſſent required to be expreſſed unto points of truth or doctrine that a particular church eſpouſes; and if men paſs that teſt, this is thought to be a profeſſion by a great many. In the mean time, the thing in my text is ſtill omitted, and that is, the profeſſion of a man's faith. It is not only the profeſſion of the truth of the point of doctrine he aſſents to, but of his aſſent in it, that is neceſſary. 1. It is greatly for the honour of Jeſus Chriſt, that men ſhould knit themſelves viſibly under his ſtandard and banner. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is no ſuch maſter, that people ſhould be aſhamed to wear his livery, and give themſelves to him. Again, it is greatly for the advantage of people too. You know there are two great plagues the church of Chriſt has been diſtreſſed by, and it will never be quite free from them; a multitude of hypocrites in a fair day, and a multitude of apoſtates in a foul day. When ſummer-weather is, hypocrites increaſe to a multitude; when a ſtorm comes, they are blown away as chaff by the wind. What is likely to be the only way that can prevent the abounding of theſe dreadful ſcandals? If there were ſtrictneſs in calling for the truth of peoples faith, for the making of them give a true profeſſion of it, if they had it, truly they would be found to adhere to the Lord, far more cloſely in a day of trial. It is thought to be an outward glory to the goſpel and Jeſus Chriſt, to have a great multitude of profeſſors of his name; but the ſcandal that their converſation gives, and the grievous offences that their apoſtacy makes, countervail it wofully. Pray what ſort of advantage is it to a poor ſinner, to be admitted and entertained in the fellowſhip of ſaints, who himſelf hath no faith at all? People are apt to think that the miniſter or church are very ſtrict or ſevere, that will not admit them to the Lord's table. Sirs, there is a great deal of love in this. What have you to do there, if you have not faith? It is but as it were tendering you poiſon; for ſo the ſpecial ordinances of

of the goſpel are unto them that have not faith. Therefore,

Thirdly, You ſee hence, what your duty is; *to make a profeſſion of faith.* Do not look upon it as a matter indifferent, whether you profeſs it or no. Say you, If I have faith, that will ſave me; what matter is it, whether the world know it or no? Commonly they that have moſt of it, make the leaſt noiſe of it; but it is a duty lying upon believers, to make profeſſion of their faith. I will give you a few things for this. 1. Let us ſee the old teſtament precepts, that were typical of new teſtament practices. There is a notable one in Deut. xxvi. 3, 5, 6, 7. I will read it to you, becauſe it hath ſomething worth ſpecial regard: ver. 3. *And thou ſhalt go unto the prieſt that ſhall be in thoſe days, and ſay unto him, I profeſs this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord ſware unto our fathers for to give us.* They would have all the country know that they are there, and that all the kingdoms round about them might know that they are there; nay, but ſays the Lord, I will injoin this upon you, that when you bring the firſt fruits of the earth, you make this profeſſion before God. And there is more of their profeſſion, in ver. 5. *And thou ſhalt ſpeak and ſay before the Lord thy God. A Syrian ready to periſh was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and ſojourned with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.* Poor Jacob went down to Egypt for want of bread to eat, where God made him a great kingdom. Now, how eaſy is the ſpiritual application of this? A Chriſtian is to profeſs before the Lord his God, that a Syrian ready to periſh was his father, nay not only ready to periſh, but that had periſhed already, and was condemned by the righteous law of God, and yet the Lord had mercy, and gave his grace to him. 2. We find the old teſtament promiſes of the new teſtament practices. Several of them ſpeak forth this profeſſion very peremptorily: Iſaiah xliv. 3, 5.

I will

I will pour (ſays the Lord) *water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring.* And what ſhall come on it? *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's: and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob; and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſurname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.* How explicit are theſe words, *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's!* It is not, that they ſhall only be the Lord's, but they ſhall ſay ſo. There is ſubſcribing with the hand, there is changing of the name: He *ſhall ſubſcribe with the hand unto the Lord, and ſurname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.* What can this be? Why, he will account himſelf of, he will enter by his own act and deed into the family of Iſrael. Is it not, that he will compare himſelf with ſo great a man as Jacob, ſo mighty a prince and wreſtler with God; nevertheleſs, to all the privileges he deſires to lay claim, and to have the ſame God to be his God. There is only one word now that is commonly repeated, and as commonly ill underſtood, as any words we know in the mouths of people; it is the word in the creed as we call it. "I believe in the holy catholic church, "the communion of ſaints." "I believe in the holy "catholic church," is, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt hath a holy church ſcattered up and down the earth. This "communion of ſaints" is of another conſideration, as it were one of the privileges of this great church. If there were no ſaints upon earth to have communion one with another, there would be no church on earth; the church would expire. Bleſſed be God, that can never be till the Judge come, when the communion of ſaints ceaſeth, and endeth only. Now, here is a grievous fault among many people that make ſome kind of profeſſion. Firſt, ſome enter into a profeſſion; they ſlip into it they do not know how; a great many years they have borne the name of profeſſors. What ſaid you? what did you? Do you think

think the bare crouding to aſſemblies, where the word of God and prayer is uſed, will make any think with themſelves, This is a man that makes profeſſion of faith? He ſhould do ſo, and the very outward appearance ſhould never be but with this deſign: but it is not enough to convey the conviction: for it is certain, that is done many times by them that are quite void of faith. Some again make a profeſſion of their faith once, and they think that is enough for as long as they live; whereas, all our life long, we ſhould be declaring the faith that is lodged in our heart. The whole courſe of our converſation is but going on in profeſſion; yet many make a profeſſion, and contradict it daily by their converſation. Now it is a principle that the world will never beat out of wiſe mens minds, that always deeds will be regarded before words; we will prove mens minds rather by what they do, than by what they ſay. If a man have a profeſſion of faith in his mouth, and have his converſation quite contrary, no man regards what he ſays. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?* ſays our Lord, Luke vi. 46. *They profeſs*, ſays the apoſtle, *that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Titus i. 16. But ſo much now ſhall ſerve for this, the ſubject-matter of the apoſtle's exhortation, the profeſſion of our faith.

The *ſecond* thing in the exhortation, is, the duty itſelf about this profeſſion that he injoins; that is, *Holding it faſt without wavering:* I take them both together. The thing that I am to ſpeak to is this,

That Chriſtians ſhould be ſtedfaſt in their profeſſion. Whatever faith or hope they make by word or deed, they ſhould be ſtedfaſt in it, they ſhould hold it faſt: *Let us hold faſt our profeſſion*, ſays the apoſtle, Heb. iv. 14.

In ſpeaking to this, I would ſhow, what is to be held faſt; why it is; and how: what is the matter

of the duty; what the enforcements to it; and what the manner of it.

I. What is it that is to be held faſt, when we are commanded to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith.

1. Hold faſt the truths profeſſed. Whatever truths of God we have known and made profeſſion of, we muſt be careful to hold them faſt. This the apoſtle Paul injoins to Timothy, 2 epiſt. i. 13. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Departing from the faith profeſſed is a grievous tranſgreſſion; and the apoſtle here, in this chapter, in theſe dreadful words that have been ſo frightful unto many a poor weak conſcience, has his eye upon this crime that I am warning you againſt: *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin;* A word, I ſay, that has been grievouſly miſtaken by many a poor exerciſed creature; a ſcripture the devil has made uſe of to diſquiet many an honeſt heart. It is not, if we ſin wilfully, if we ſin againſt light and knowledge, that there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin; that were one of the moſt dreadful things that can be thought of. The apoſtle's meaning certainly is this, If we ſin wilfully by abandoning the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only propitiation for our ſins, we ſhall find that there is no other ſacrifice for ſin: if we reſiſt the only true One, the blood of the covenant, and the Spirit of grace working therewith, as he explaineth in the 29th verſe, there is then no more ſacrifice for ſin, for the ſinner then throws away the only ſacrifice, there is none elſe to be had. Apoſtacy from the Lord, and letting our profeſſion ſlip, hath begun many a time at ſome points of truth, which a great many Chriſtians, it may be, thought of no great importance. With what ſeverity does the apoſtle thunder againſt the Galatians for their error in point of juſtification; and that was this, that they would mix the works of the law

law with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt in the goſpel: chap. i. 6, 7. *I marvel*, (ſays he) *that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt, unto another goſpel; which is not another; but there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt.*

2. In the holding faſt our profeſſion, we ſhould hold faſt the communion of ſaints. Whoever they be that leave the communion of ſaints for the converſation of the wicked, that perſon doth certainly forego his profeſſion. It is impoſſible, unleſs through a ſtrong temptation, that a true Chriſtian can ſavour that delight to his heart in the converſation of the wicked, as in communion with the godly. Thereupon we find, that the apoſtle, in the 25th verſe, does in a manner explain what he means by holding faſt our profeſſion: *Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, &c. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If you forſake your Chriſtian aſ-"ſemblies, your meetings together, your edifying and "helping one another, if you forſake theſe, ſo far "you forſake your profeſſion."

3. In holding faſt the profeſſion of our faith, this is required, that we hold faſt the exerciſe of the grace of faith and hope. If this be not minded, you will quickly find that all things elſe in a profeſſion do wither and waſte away. When you are called to hold faſt your profeſſion, you are called to hold on in believing, in the exerciſe of it.

II. The *ſecond* thing is, Wherefore is it that Chriſtians ſhould be ſo careful to be ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion of their faith?

1. Becauſe there are a great many devices of Satan and the world to drive people from it. Holding faſt does imply that there are endeavours to take things from us. That which none will pluck away, none needs to hold. There is reſiſtance that is made

from without, and great are thoſe that are made by Satan and the world. *1ſt*, From Satan. The devil is a cruel, malicious, and envious enemy. We all have ſome ſort of notion of theſe woful wickedneſſes in the ſpiritual adverſaries. But there is one thing concerning the devil we do not duly conſider; the devil is the moſt deſperate ſinner of all God's creatures. I mean not only deſperate in wickedneſs, but deſtitute of all relief under it; and therefore the profeſſion of faith and hope in a ſinner, is the moſt grievous thing that the devil can behold. He once had all believers his captives, and would fain bring them back again into his bondage. There is nothing grates the devil more, than a ſinner profeſſing his hope in that glory he is fallen from. The devil is a deſperate ſinner, and he would fain drive all ſinners into the ſame ſtate with himſelf, and if it were not his cunning, that he knows the danger of awaking men. If the devil had his will, he would rather be glad that all ſinners were deſpairing than flattering themſelves with vain hopes; but becauſe their ſecurity renders their ſtate more deſperate in the iſſue, therefore the devil befriends them, and keeps all in peace. *2dly*, From the world. You know what enmity the world has teſtified againſt the people of God; and all this enmity ariſes from profeſſion. Let a man have never ſo much faith, if this faith never diſcovers itſelf, neither by word or deed, the world would never have any ſort of diſturbance thereby, and would not be angry at men. It is the teſtimony of the witneſſes that torments men that are upon the earth. What, think you, is the reaſon of all the perſecution that you read of in the word, and the bloody perſecution that hath been in this land, and ſeveral other places? The true reaſon is the profeſſion of faith of the people of God. If believers would part with their profeſſion, the world would part with their quarrels.

2. Chriſtians ſhould be very careful of their profeſſion, to hold it faſt; for the honour of God and his Son

Son Jeſus Chriſt is greatly concerned in it. It is all we can do for his glory. The higheſt glory that is given to Chriſt in this world, is by the ſtedfaſt maintaining of the profeſſion of our faith. The greateſt affront that can be done, is by the people's abandoning the profeſſion of that faith they once made. It is a horrible thing; a thing the Lord calls the heavens to be aſtoniſhed at: *My people have forſaken me*, and have forſaken me upon ſome alledged fault alſo: *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* &c. Jer. ii. 5, 12.

3. *Laſtly*, Chriſtians ſhould be careful to maintain their profeſſion, to hold it faſt; for their peace and their ſalvation ſtands mightily on it. It is remarkable how the apoſtle divides believing and confeſſion: Rom. x. 9, 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* Pray obſerve, if a man believe with the heart, he is not only poſſeſſed of righteouſneſs, and ſtands clothed with it before God; but ſalvation is ſecured to him, by virtue of that righteouſneſs too. Yet you ſee, that the apoſtle carefully ſhuns the dividing theſe two, faith and confeſſion, righteouſneſs in the one, ſalvation in the other: *Confeſſion is made*, ſays he, *unto ſalvation.* After we are once poſſeſſed of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt by faith, we only want complete ſalvation, and we muſt go on confeſſing his name till we be poſſeſſed of it. It is obſervable, that of all the hells upon earth that ever a true believer fell into, moſt of them have been upon this account, when the violence of temptation hath prevailed upon the people of God, in a day of trial, to abandon their profeſſion. What ſad inſtances have we of ſome of the moſt eminent ſaints and ſervants of God, that have been left of God in a day of trial, that have left their profeſſion, and have been tortured in their ſouls till they have returned to it again, though with the peril of their lives? A ſtout and free adhering to the profeſſion of their faith, was commonly attended with joy

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and peace in believing; and denying thereof, and complying with the courſe of the world, what ſad ſmart did it raiſe in their conſciences?

III. The *third* and laſt thing is, How this is to be done. I ſhall not now inſiſt upon all things I thought of, with reſpect to this, how a Chriſtian is to hold faſt his profeſſion. I ſhall only direct the exhortation theſe three ways.

1. Hold faſt the profeſſion of your faith before God. If you ever have called God your God and Father, never eat in theſe words again. How ſorry and pitiful, but common a matter is it, that a believer will call God his God confidently in the morning, and may be in the dark evening call him by another name? *Thou ſhalt call me, My God, and ſhalt not depart from me:* it is a promiſe the Lord makes; the Lord fulfil it to us.

2. We muſt learn to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith before the devil. Whenever Satan and we come together, he begins to aſſault; then be ſure to keep the profeſſion of your faith; hold it faſt. *Above all*, ſays the apoſtle Paul, *take the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, Eph. vi. 16. So alſo ſays the apoſtle Peter, 1 epiſt. v. 9. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.*

3. We ſhould be careful to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith before the world. The world has a ſharp ſight into the infirmities of the ſaints, but is quite blind as to their virtues: They cannot ſee theſe: they cannot ſee the beauty of the inward man; but they can ſee the ſpots in the converſation of the people of God, and they will be careful to take notice of them, and to make more of them than they are. The more captious the world be, the more careful ſaints ſhould be in their converſations: *Be blameleſs and harmleſs*, ſays the apoſtle, *the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the*

the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, holding forth the word of life, &c. Phil. ii. 15, 16.

I would only, before leaving this head, name a few things that make this holding faſt of our profeſſion very hard, and ſhould make us the more diligent in the exerciſe of faith, that we may get ſtrength from the author of our faith to maintain the profeſſion of it.

1ſt, It is very hard to keep the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, when ſin is in the conſcience. The law of God enters there, and a man ſees his own iniquity. Peter perhaps had made no profeſſion of his faith before; but if he had, he renounced it when he ſpoke thoſe ungodly words, *Depart from me.* What! a Chriſtian pray Chriſt to leave him; is that ſpoke like a believer? But the ſenſe of ſin was raiſed in him, upon the appearance of divine power in that great work of Chriſt.

2dly, It is very hard to keep the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, when we ſee a rod in an angry God's hand, and feel the ſmart of it upon our own backs. To think the ſame thing of God, to have the ſame kind thoughts of Chriſt, and lively hopes of heaven, in this caſe as formerly, is hard indeed. Job was a man that held faſt the profeſſion of his faith, without wavering, at a mighty rate, when he ſaid, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He alſo ſhall be my ſalvation; for an hypocrite ſhall not come before him*, Job xiii. 15, 16. As if he had ſaid, "I defy "all hypocrites in the world to ſay ſo." Is there any but a believer, and a ſtedfaſt one, who is able to ſay, A God ſlaying me ſhall be my God.

3dly, It is hard to keep the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, when there is a furnace of mens wrath for our profeſſion, and when there are great hazards a man is expoſed to for his profeſſion. This has tried many a man's profeſſion. There are ſignal inſtances of this in the 3d and 6th chapters of Daniel.

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The furious king and the fiery furnace was juſt before the three children; "Now," ſays Nebuchadnezzar, "will you fall down, and worſhip my golden "image, or no? Will you profeſs ſtill your faith in "God?" "Yes," ſay they, "whether he deliver "us, or no, we will not ſerve thy gods, nor worſhip "the golden image which thou haſt ſet up." Daniel would not forbear his praying in uſual times and places, and uſual circumſtances, for all the danger of death thereby. This was the confeſſion of his faith.

4*thly*, It is hard to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, in the ſight and feeling of unbelief. When a poor creature finds unbelief in him, yet, notwithſtanding, to adhere to, and hold faſt the profeſſion of his faith, is no eaſy matter. He was a young believer for time, but an old ſkilful believer for ſtedfaſtneſs, that gave an anſwer to our Lord, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief;* "I own "faith in the face of unbelief, in the feeling of it." Thereupon it is that that word turns, I ſuppoſe a good part of the meaning of it is this that I drive at, 2 Tim. ii. 12, 13, *If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him; if we deny him, he will alſo deny us; If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf.* Pray obſerve, *If we believe not*, if we have not the faith, that ſtrength of faith that the caſe calls for; yet his faithfulneſs will take care of ſecuring a gracious iſſue: for the meaning cannot be, If you have no faith at all, but if your faith be weak, and be not in that high meaſure the caſe calls for, the Lord will take care to ſupport it; and he has done ſo many times to many of his people, and they have been only obliged to God's faithfulneſs in keeping his word.

Laſtly, It is hard to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, in the ſight of death and judgment. That is the great trial of a man's profeſſion of his faith: this is the great wind, and ſtorm, and rain that beats upon the houſe, and tries how well

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it is built. It is an eaſy matter to make a profeſſion in a fair day, and keep to it; but when this ſtorm comes, it is a great matter to hold it faſt. How many ſad inſtances are there? Many, nay moſt Chriſtians unconcernedly ſit down, and think ſometimes that they have faith enough for their daily work; but they do not know what proviſion they have for this great trial, the very foreſight of death and judgment. Death looks near, when it enters, as it were deeply into the meditation and thought of the heart of a poor ſinner. Canſt thou maintain the hope thou profeſſedſt the other day? canſt thou look on death and judgment as near at hand, and ſay, "I retain the ſame confidence "and hope of eternal life, that I had when I thought "theſe things were afar off?" The apoſtle therefore did expreſs his faith extraordinarily, and profeſſed it highly, when he ſang, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin; and the ſtrength of ſin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. He reckons himſelf, by faith, as ſure of the victory, as if already poſſeſſed of it. The believer can by a ſtrong faith ſing the praiſe of victory, before the battle be half ended: for the apoſtle Paul had not yet known what death and the grave were; he knew them only by faith, and knew who had overcome death, and knew that he had an intereſt in him that had overcome both.

SERMON III.

HEBREWS x. 23.

Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that hath promiſed.

I HAVE ſpoke unto the exhortation to the duty that is in the firſt part of the verſe, *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering.* The apoſtle, ye ſee, joins himſelf in the exhortation; and, as it were, exhorts himſelf, whilſt he exhorts them. That great apoſtle, who had ſo much faith, who had made ſo noble a profeſſion of it, joins himſelf with the reſt of believers, *Let us hold faſt*, &c. Paul's faith was greater than that of the Hebrews; his profeſſion and confidence higher; his ſtock richer; he joins himſelf equally with them: let us all mind this. Upon this I have ſpoken unto theſe two things.

1. That which is the matter that this exhortation is converſant about, and that is the profeſſion of faith, or the confeſſion of our hope; and of that I ſpoke under this note, *That whoever they be that have Chriſtian faith and hope, they ſhould make a Chriſtian profeſſion or confeſſion of it.*

2. The *ſecond* thing in the words is the duty he calls to, with reſpect to this profeſſion; and that is, holding it faſt without wavering; and of that I ſpake laſt day, that Chriſtians ſhould be ſtedfaſt in their profeſſion, *not moved away from the hope of the goſpel*, Col. i. 23. This firſt part of the verſe I ſhall diſmiſs with two things, and proceed to this argument.

The *firſt* is this, That it is a mighty hard thing to make a true profeſſion of faith. *Secondly*, It is a mighty hard thing to keep it when it is made.

Firſt,

Firſt, It is a mighty hard thing to make a true profeſſion of faith. I do not mean it is hard for folks to ſay they believe, that is as eaſily ſaid as another word is; but to make a true profeſſion of faith, is a matter of great difficulty. No man can make a true profeſſion of faith, but he that hath true faith. This is certain and evident in itſelf; for if a man make profeſſion of what he hath not really, it is but a lie, and a lie of groſs ſort. No man can make a true profeſſion of faith, but the man who hath not only true faith, but hath ſome ſort of knowledge that he hath it; for the profeſſion of faith is ſomething beſides the acting of faith. The acting of faith is, that it be wrought in the heart; the profeſſion of faith is, a confident owning of that act before God, and men, and devils. They are witneſſes of mens profeſſion, but the Lord only is the witneſs of the truth and ſincerity of faith; but when faith is come to profeſſion, it is known to more than God. Now, that I may illuſtrate this in a few things, That it is a hard thing to make a true profeſſion of faith, I would ſpeak a little to both the words, that in our tranſlation, and that in the original. We call it *profeſſion of faith*; the original is, *the confeſſion of our hope*.

Firſt, To take it for profeſſion of faith: *I believe*, the firſt word in the apoſtle's creed, applied to divine things, is in ſome the greateſt lie in the world. Moſt perſons are guilty of lying in ſaying, *I believe*; for God and their own conſciences may tell them, that though their tongues ſpeak the words, their ſouls are ſtrangers to the power and truth of this believing. I will name ſome few of the heads that people commonly profeſs faith on; and when they are ſeriouſly conſidered, it will be found that the faith of them is very rare.

1. To begin with that which the apoſtle calls the firſt thing that a man muſt believe, that God is, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh unto God, muſt believe that he is.* How uncharitably would people think themſelves to

be dealt with, if they were charged with want of faith as to God's being? How confident are people that they are ſincere, at leaſt in this, "I believe that "there is a God?" Pray conſider what there is in this believing. *He dwelleth in light that no man can approach to; whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee.* Whenever his glory ſhines in any manner before the eyes of a creature, it is enough to confound him. Do men believe that there is a God, that live plainly as if there were none? Do men believe that there is a God, in whoſe preſence they are continually, and in the mean time have no awful thoughts of him? the true faith of the being of a God would make the world a moſt miſerable world, unleſs Chriſt were known, and God in Chriſt. There is nothing more terrible to a man, as a man, and as a ſinner, than any diſplays of the glory of God, unleſs there be ſome diſcovery of this glory, as ſhining in grace towards men. There is more ſpiritual ſenſe, I believe, than commonly is conceived, in that old teſtament word, *I ſhall die, for I have ſeen God.* Jacob wondered at the matter, and *called the name of the place Peniel: for*, ſays he, *I have ſeen God face to face, and my life is preſerved*, Gen xxxii. 30.

2. A future ſtate, and the ſoul's immortality. How commonly do men pretend to believe that they know God in Chriſt, that they believe the truth of Chriſt, and the myſtery of God manifeſt in the fleſh? He that can believe this well, may believe any thing. Let people be firm in the ſpiritual belief of it, they are fit to believe any thing; that God became man, Luke i. 35. Gal. iv. 4.; that this man is God over all, bleſſed for ever; that this man came in the fulneſs of time, and laid down his life a ranſom for many. There is nothing about Chriſt Jeſus, or about the whole myſtery of the goſpel, but is incredible to a natural man, and to a natural reaſon. When Paul ſpake about one point, the reſurrection of the dead,

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O king Agrippa, ſays he, *why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?* Acts xxvi. 8. Here are matters far more incredible: That God ſhould become man; that this man ſhould be ſtill God over all, bleſſed for ever; that this man is made the great ark for the ſalvation of all the elect of God. Do not run away eaſily with an imagination, that it is a common and ordinary thing to believe the truth of goſpel-doctrine. People will ſay, it is very eaſy to believe what is written in the bible; it is a hard matter to believe, they may ſay, their own ſalvation; and that one is a great deal eaſier than the other. If there be a firm aſſent begotten by the Spirit of God upon the heart, as to the foundation-truth of the goſpel, the particular application of that to thy ſoul for thy ſalvation will be found an eaſy thing. Pray now, wherefore is it ſaid ſo often in the word, that faith is the gift of God; that faith is the operation of God; that Jeſus Chriſt is the author and finiſher of faith? It certainly points forth this to you, That believing is a mighty hard thing; that divine power is needful to beget it, and bring it foreward, and act it, and maintain it.

Again, take the matter as to our *hope*, there is great difficulty to avow the hope of eternal life. It is a hope of the greateſt bleſſing that can be conceived, it is a hope bottomed only upon the pure word of God. When you examine your hearts, you find ſome hopes of being ſaved; and that, in the day of the Lord, you ſhall ſtand with peace and confidence before your judge; why ſo? wherefore do you hope for this? Is it not becauſe God hath ſaid it? is it not becauſe the God that cannot lie hath ſpoken it? If you expect to be ſaved upon any other ground, but becauſe God hath ſaid it, ye muſt change your minds ere ever you be ſaved; for ye are off the rock, ye are off the ſure foundation that all God's Iſrael muſt reſt upon. This hope is a hard thing to have and to maintain, becauſe it is a hope that is aſſaulted; there

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is no natural probability for it, and a great many difficulties lying in its way. What is there now that can befriend the matter in the eye of ſenſe and reaſon? There is a poor creature under all the frailties of body and mind, that are either natural to us as men, or that grow and creep upon us by age, and that are in us becauſe of ſin; our hope is, that we ſhall be perfect in ſoul and body in the enjoyment of God. Now we are encumbered with imperfections every day, and nothing ſo common and ſenſible as diſtance from him, and there is no probability of coming nearer. It is a probable thing that a young child may live and grow to be a man or woman, it is probable that a young plant may grow to be a tree; theſe are the common works of God in his providence, in guiding of this world: but what is there of probability, by philoſophy, by reaſon, or ſenſe, unto a poor Chriſtian's attaining the poſſeſſion of his hope? There is none for it, but a great many, on the contrary, againſt it. There is the law, conſcience, ſin, Satan, and the world, all combating our hope every day. So that from this you may ſee it is a mighty difficult matter to make a true profeſſion of faith; a man muſt have that faith or hope, before he can truly profeſs them; theſe things are hard to come by, and hard to keep.

Secondly, It is as hard to hold faſt the profeſſion of faith, after we have made it. When a believer hath made a true profeſſion of faith, and a true confeſſion of his hope, and made it often, it is very hard to hold it faſt. The greateſt believers have failed here. I do not ſay failed quite, but they have ſtumbled ſhamefully. Who was a greater believer and confeſſor of his hope than Abraham? yet he ſtumbled by unbelief grievouſly, again and again; Iſaac did ſo, Jacob did ſo. David, that great believer and confeſſor of his faith, ſays, *All men are liars:* nay, it were well if his unbelief ſpake no worſe; it was, in effect, God is a liar. Samuel, and Gad, and Nathan, and the other

other prophets, ſpake to him in the name of the Lord: And yet, ſays he, *I ſaid in my haſte, All men are liars;* and ſaid, *I ſhall one day fall by the hands of Saul;* for all the promiſes God had made, and for all the faith David had avowed. But above all poor Peter, who is recommended above all men for his confeſſion, Matth. xvi, how does he fall from it? *Thou art Chriſt,* ſays he to our Lord, *the Son of the living God,* ver. 16. *Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* This great confeſſor, what a ſtrange confeſſion does he make to the maid! *Art thou one of his diſciples?* ſays ſhe. *I know not the man,* ſays he. It is impoſſible, that a believer can keep the profeſſion of his faith ſtedfaſt, unleſs he keep the exerciſe of his faith conſtant; if faith decays in its exerciſe within, the beauty and ſtedfaſtneſs of profeſſion will be marred abroad.

I come now to the *ſecond* thing in the words, and that is, the apoſtle's argument by which he enforceth this exhortation: *For he is faithful that hath promiſed,* ſo we read it. Three things I would take notice of, in the conſideration of the reading of the words as they lie here, before I take them up in themſelves; three things I note in general.

1. The apoſtle names no perſon promiſing, only ſpeaks in general of one that promiſes.

2. He ſpeaks of no ſort of promiſe, but only, that there is a promiſe.

3. This I note alſo, that the word which we have rendered, *He hath promiſed,* in the original is in the preſent time, *He is faithful that is promiſing.* The promiſe here is not ſpoken of as an act paſt and gone, but of that which was preſent.

1. We find here the apoſtle does not ſpeak of any perſon that promiſes, but only ſays, *He is faithful that hath promiſed.* Who then is the promiſer? You may be perſuaded that it is a divine perſon; and it is no great matter which of the Three we confine it to;

for

for I know it is generally applied to Chriſt's promiſing. But we find, *1ſt*, That the promiſes that are the ground of the Chriſtian's faith, are the promiſes of the Father, as the Author, as the grand Contriver and original Fountain of the covenant. So the apoſtle calls him, Titus i. 2. *In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.* *2dly*, We find the promiſes aſcribed unto Jeſus Chriſt, and he is the promiſer. So when he left his people and went out of this world, he left them with the opening of his heart to them in abundance of promiſes. And in his laſt prayer, that is as good as any promiſe in the word; Chriſt's prayer is as good as any promiſe in the bible. The promiſes are alſo given by the Holy Ghoſt: He is called *the Spirit of promiſe;* both becauſe he is promiſed, and becauſe he is a promiſer and performer too; for promiſing and performing are aſcribed ſtill to the ſame perſon, Heb. x. 15.

2. The apoſtle doth not tell us what is promiſed, but only ſays, *He is faithful that hath promiſed.* What then muſt we underſtand to be the meaning of this dark expreſſion, when a promiſe is ſpoken of, and no particular bleſſing ſpecified? It is eaſily gathered from the ſcope: for the apoſtle is bidding Chriſtians *hold faſt the profeſſion of their faith;* the confeſſion of their hope; for, ſays he, *He is faithful that promiſes;* he plainly implies, that what he means by the promiſe is as large and broad, as all the foundation of faith and hope that a Chriſtian has. God's promiſes and our faith are to be commenſurate; we are to make our faith as large and wide as the promiſe; it is to be ſhapen as the promiſe.

3. The *third* thing that I note in general is, That the apoſtle's word in the original is, *He is faithful that is promiſing*, that is, in the act of promiſing; ſo it is in the original; he is faithful that is now, and preſently promiſing; the ſame word, as in Heb. xi. 11. The promiſes of God are not, as people imagine, things

things that are over and past, as soon as the word is out of his mouth; but they are continued, constant, current streams that will carry on his people that are in them still, till they be accomplished fully. A promise never ends till there be performance; a promise is in act and motion still, till it be accomplished. The like word the apostle hath, 1 Thess. v. 24. 1 Thess. ii. 12. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*, as we translate it: there had been as good reason to translate it, *Faithful is he that is now calling you*: he called you at first, by the effectual working of his grace with the gospel; and that calling continues still, and it will never leave you, till it bring you to heaven. Just so it is with the promise. There are five places to God's promise, and we must have our eye distinctly upon them. 1*st*, God's promise is in God's heart; and there it is, but a purpose unknown and unsearchable to all creatures whatsoever. This is called a promise; for it is said, *He promised before the world began*, Titus i. 2. 2*dly*, A promise is next considered, as it is in the word. There it is recorded, it is entered, and will never be repealed. 3*dly*, The promise of God is in Christ; that is another place for the promise: *All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. *The covenant is confirmed of God in Christ*, Gal. iii. 17. There is no change here; a promise in God's heart will surely have effect from the word; performance of a promise in Christ's hand can never miscarry. 4*thly*, A promise comes to be in the hand of a believer's faith; and this is a shaking, trembling hand. As it is in God's hands, Christ's hands, or in the word, heaven and earth, and hell cannot shake it; but as it is in a believer's hand, the least blast from either will shake it. A poor believer grasps the promise of God frequently very weakly: yet if he take it, it is well, if he lay hold on it any manner of way. There would none of us ever come to heaven, if the promise of God did not keep us better by its grace and power,

than we can keep it by our faith; for this is the order of God, his promiſe is a mean that catches a believer, and a believer catches the promiſe by faith. Our hold of the promiſe many times fails, but the promiſe to us never fails. If the promiſe of Chriſt's grace come and take hold of your hearts, it will hook you, and pull you, and keep you, and draw you certainly to glory; but our faith is off and on. *Laſtly*, Believers ſometimes have the promiſe of God in their hand; not only in the hand of faith, but, if I may ſo ſpeak, in the hand of performance; then they think it is well. If I may uſe the expreſſion, there was never a good man that had a more bleſſed armful and heartful than old Simeon; he had all the promiſes of the old teſtament, and all the bleſſings of the new teſtament, and all grace on earth, and all the glory in heaven, at one time in his arms. When he took the child Jeſus in his arms, *Lord*, ſays he, *now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*, Luke ii. 29, 30. He had the covenant in his hand, he had all the bleſſings in poſſeſſion. He might have ſaid as Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 27. *For this child I prayed: and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.* Something like this believers ſometimes have; the promiſe of God brings forth, and they have the birth in their arms; but this is not that we muſt live by.

The apoſtle ſays here, that God is promiſing: *Faithful is he that is promiſing.* I would warn believers of this common fault and failing, they look upon the promiſe of God as that which is paſt and over: they are many times ſaying, I had once a promiſe of God, I do not know what is become of it now. What, is it out of God's heart? out of the bible? out of thy faith's hand? The Lord is ſtill promiſing the promiſe of eternal life that thou didſt lay hold upon in thy firſt venturing thy ſoul upon Chriſt Jeſus. God is making that promiſe every day to you, and you ſhould

should be believing it every day. We live by faith, and God keeps us in life by promising. His promise runs down through all states and conditions, and so should our faith do. So much now for the general things from the words.

There are several doctrines from it, that I intend, if the Lord will, to speak from.

1. The *first* note that I raise from the words, is, (understand it well and wisely, it may be you will think it an odd observation), *The Christian's God is a promising God.* The apostle describes him by this: "What is the God that I Paul depend upon? He "that promises; I will and can have nothing to do "with any God, but he that is promising."

2. *God is faithful in all his promises.*

3. *The faith of his people in a promising God, should some way answer the faithfulness of God in his promises.*

4. *A bold avowing of our faith, is not bragging of ourselves, but a magnifying the faithfulness of the speaker.* This is plainly the scope of, *Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering;* for he is a faithful God you lean upon.

Of the *first* of these a little at this time, *The Christian's God is a promising God;* a God made known to us by his promises, who comes to us in the mask, and under the veil of promises. Let us see a little how this comes about, and how the world is changed to our great advantage, and his great praise. This promising God was from eternity blessed in himself, and in the mutual communication of love and delight, and converse betwixt the blessed Three. He is also called a purposing God, Eph. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. In the fulness of time he makes a world. He makes himself known in this world three ways. 1. He makes known himself to some creatures by their creation. There are some creatures that God made on purpose that they might know him. He made the greatest

part of creatures in a manner only that God might be known by others, not by themſelves. The heavens and earth, and all the hoſt of them; this world, and all the creatures that are therein, ſave one ſort, are all incapable of knowing God; but God is made known by them. The only creatures we know that are made capable of knowing God, are angels and men. The one ſort, the glorious ſpirits, were made the firſt day of the creation; the other is man, half ſpirit and half fleſh, that was made on the laſt day of the creation. Now, as ſoon as theſe rational creatures ſtart out of nothing, by the commanding word of their Maker: as ſoon as ever they come into being, immediately the Lord's glory, as a Creator, is ſtaring them in the face. Adam is no ſooner a man, than he is a knower of God, as his God Creator. 2. We find God making himſelf known to man (for it is about man we will keep ourſelves confined) as a Lord Commander; and as he has made this creature, he will diſpoſe of him as he ſees good. He determines the place of his living; he determines his employment; he lays him under law, and gives him a juſt and righteous command. He made himſelf known to man as a threatener too: *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Ay, but, ſay you, was there no promiſe in the firſt covenant? Truly the word does not ſay there was any: but if people will needs have it that there was a promiſe, it is not worthy the name of a promiſe, in regard of what we have in the new teſtament. That promiſe laboured under woful diſadvantages, that we are now relieved from. 1*ſt*, That promiſe was a promiſe of continuance in that happy ſtate he was made in, but no promiſe of a better. There was no promiſe of eternal life to the firſt Adam, as far as we find in the terms of it. There was no more ſpoken of, but a continuance in that ſtate: and this is implied in the threatening, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die;* which implies, Until the

the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt live. But we have a promiſe in the new covenant of a far better ſtate than that we are in. 2*dly*, If there was any promiſe, it was a conditional one, a promiſe upon the condition of perfect obedience. There was no promiſe but upon this condition, *Do this, and live.* Life was promiſed upon the condition of *doing*, but no promiſe of grace to enable a man to *do* it. But now we are brought under a promiſe, bleſſed be he that promiſeth. Whatever is required to be done by the man that would have the bleſſing promiſed, grace to do that is promiſed by the promiſer. Hath he required faith? He hath promiſed faith, and he works faith. Hath he required repentance? He promiſes, and gives it. Our Lord is a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins to the houſe of Iſrael. Are we required to be holy in all manner of converſation? Hath he not promiſed to ſanctify and make us holy? Hath he not prayed for this, that we may be ſanctified? I told you but juſt now, Chriſt's prayer is as good as a promiſe. The beſt promiſes we have in the bible are the promiſes made by the Father to the Son; and next to them, are thoſe promiſes that we draw out of the Son's prayer to the Father. So that, upon theſe accounts, whatever there was in the firſt covenant, it is not to be called a promiſe. 3*dly*, There was no mediator in the firſt covenant: and therefore it cannot be called a covenant of promiſe, like that we are now brought under. The mediator of a covenant is to ſee the terms kept on both parts, and to ſee the ground ſecure and ſafe, that the bargain may not go back on either ſide. This is our Lord's undertaking, and his work. Now you ſee, that as ſoon as ſin came in, grace comes in with a promiſe. God made himſelf known to Adam as his creator, commander, and threatener of juſt puniſhment to him for his diſobedience. As ſoon as he diſobeyed, ſo ſoon is he convicted of guilt in his own conſcience. As ſoon as ever he is arraigned before God, the womb of the pro-

miſe is open; then the ſluice of the promiſe was drawn up, and it hath been flowing to this day. It began with a promiſe. Adam and Eve were to know God now under no other name, but the God that ſaid, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head.* So it went on through all the old teſtament; that ſtill went along by the promiſe. *The Chriſtian's God*, I ſay, *is a promiſing God.*

1. God cannot be known but as a *promiſing God.* There is no ſaving knowledge of him, but as he reveals himſelf in the promiſe of life through Chriſt Jeſus. 2. There is no worſhipping of him but in this way. The apoſtle joins them all together, Rom. x. 13,----17. How can they call on him of whom they have not heard? How can they believe on him? They cannot pray, they cannot believe, they cannot know him, unleſs it comes by the word of God. *Faith*, ſays he, *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;* that is, the word of promiſe. Faith never comes by the word of command; but it comes by the word of promiſe. God commands faith; but God never works faith by the commanding of faith as any duty, but by the promiſe of faith as it is heard. The giving of faith, is the performance of the grand promiſe of faith. 3. There is no believing on God, but as a promiſing God; there is no loving God, but as a promiſing God. If you ſuffer your hearts to take a view of God out of a promiſe, you wander in a maze and wilderneſs: he is a conſuming fire, except in a promiſe. The Lord hath framed us in that manner, that it is impoſſible that God can be loved, but by a perſon that takes up this God as a promiſing God. All mankind have either to do with God as promiſing, or threatening. The threatening God threatens the moſt dreadfully: the promiſing God promiſes the greateſt good. It is impoſſible that there can be true and ſtrong love fixed on that perſon from whom we do dread the greateſt evil: therefore the Lord hath framed the matter ſo in the diſpenſing of his grace,

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in the call of the goſpel, that he ſtill tenders himſelf to his people, and at all times hath done ſince ſin came into the world, under ſome gracious diſcovery of himſelf. *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*, ſaith the Lord to Moſes. Even when the man is afraid to look upon God, ſaith the Lord, *Do not be afraid, I am the God of Abraham*, &c. "I am the God of thy fathers, I appeared to them, I "ſpake my good mind to them, and they lived and "died in the promiſe; and thou, Moſes, art one that "art concerned therein;" Exod. iii. 3, 4.

Two things I ſhall conclude with at this time.

1. It is a marvellous condeſcenſion in God, that he hath come to us as a promiſing God. He might have ſtood upon his ſtate, and throne, and dignity; he might have kept upon the throne of his glories: but in wonderful grace he comes down, if I may ſo ſpeak, as an equal; and he comes into covenant with us, and plights his troth. Is not this wonderful? Solomon wondered: *Will God indeed dwell with men?* No wonder if God will command men; no wonder if God will threaten ſinners; theſe things become God, and are like him, and are ſuited to his nature: but will God promiſe to man? *Will he make a covenant with man?* Job xli. 3, 4. So Ezek. xvi. 6,----9.

2. As it is a great condeſcenſion in God to reveal himſelf to us as a promiſing God, ſo it is a great duty upon his people to keep that name of God continually in their eye. Pray what do you do in the word? in prayer? What is the God you deal with? Do you betake yourſelves to the word, to hear the word of God as a commander? Ay, but where is the ſtrength for obedience? That is uncomfortable work then. Ay, but, ſaith the believer, God's promiſing for all that he hath done for his people before, and all that they have done in their actings of faith towards him, encourages me. Would it not put another ſort of edge upon our prayers, were we to eye God as a promiſing God? What do we do in prayer; think you,

you, what is the buſineſs of prayer? The main thing in prayer is to put God in mind of the promiſe. The great work of Chriſtians is to turn promiſes into prayer, and God will turn both into performance. Every believer, you know, is to aſk according to God's will. The aſking according to God's will, is to aſk in faith, James i. 5, 6. And not only to aſk what God bids us aſk, but to aſk what God has commanded us to hope; and we know what to hope for, by what God has promiſed. If we ſtretch our hope beyond the promiſe, we are out of the way: but his promiſes are ſo large, that a believer needs not to fear but he hath room enough for his faith to work in, nay to run in. The faith of a believer hath room enough to treat with God in. Labour for this. All the diſquiets that are in the minds of believers, all the changes that are in their thoughts about the God they have to deal with, all proceed from this. In the day of his love, in the day of their peace, he hath been made known to them as a promiſing God. Ay, but now there is a cloud comes upon their faith, and may be a veil upon his face; and he comes to them and appears as if he were a threatening or commanding God. No dealing with him in this caſe. Learn to mind God's true name, *He is a promiſing God.* The Lord teach you this.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promised.

YOU heard that these words contain the argument by which the apostle presseth the preceeding exhortation to Christians, *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;* and the argument is very proper, and very strong, *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith,* for God holds fast his promises sufficiently. Yea, our faith is built upon his promises. It is time enough for faith to stagger when God fails, but never till then. If God could fail, then a believer's faith should fail, and never till then. With regard to this argument of the apostle's, I did first take a general view of it, with respect to something contained in the manner of speaking. 1. He speaks of a promiser, and names no person, only he that promises. He knew well enough, that Christians knew whom he meant; that it was God's promise; faith looks to that only. 2. The apostle doth not tell what he promises; but only he hath promised. And here now it is needful that we gather the extent of the promise, and the nature of the faith and hope that the apostle is exhorting them to maintain the profession of. God's promises, and the believer's faith and hope are justly and equally commensurate; all that we need to desire and hope for, God's promises secure. 3. I noted, that the word here in the original is, *Faithful is he that promises;* or, that is the *promiser;* or, that is as it were in the act of *promising.* The promises of God are not past things; they may seem so to us; but they are always current, and pre-

ſent, and acting, and working perpetually, till performance comes.

From the words themſelves, I did propoſe ſeveral truths to be handled. The firſt that I began upon, was this: *That the Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God.* The name that the apoſtle here by the Spirit gives him, is, *He that promiſes.* Beſides what was ſpoken laſt day, I ſhall now further ſpeak upon this truth, in handling theſe two things.

1. I will ſhew you what is a promiſing God, and what is to be conſidered therein.

2. What need we have of a promiſing God; that there is no other God can ſave us but a promiſing God.

Laſtly, I ſhall make application of the point.

I. *What is a promiſing God?* It is the true God manifeſting his grace and mercy to us, and ſecuring that by his faithful word, that is a promiſing God; he is the true God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Conſider, in this matter, the high and eternal riſe of all promiſes; and that is the infinite, unaccountable love of God unto the choſen. The promiſe of God is but the birth of the purpoſe of God. The purpoſe of God ſprings from nothing, the promiſe of God ſprings from ſomewhat. There had never been a word of good-will to the children of men ſpoken by God, if there had not been thoughts of good-will framed in his heart from eternity. This we find ſometimes called the promiſe: *God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began*, Titus i. 2. The meaning is, he purpoſed it before the world began, and as ſoon as the world began he revealed it. This is carefully to be taken notice of, That all the promiſes of God ſpring from this purpoſe of God, and are deſigned by our Lord in their true application to anſwer the purpoſe; that as the purpoſe of his grace is a ſure and limited one, determined, and diſtinct; ſo the promiſe is

is of the ſame deſign. *Who hath ſaved us*, ſaith the apoſtle, *and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began, but is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.

2. About this promiſing God and his promiſes, we are to conſider the channel wherein they run; and this is all in and through Jeſus Chriſt. That man looks with a bad eye upon any of the promiſes of God, that does not ſee Chriſt in them: and they do not ſee Chriſt rightly, unleſs they ſee all the promiſes in him. We ſee the covenant in him, and him in the covenant; all the promiſes of God are in him; he was promiſed himſelf, and all the bleſſings that are promiſed, are purchaſed by him, and left to his people as a legacy in his laſt will, confirmed by his own death.

3. The promiſes in this promiſing God, come to be conſidered as they lie before us in the word. There they are indited by the Holy Ghoſt, and written by holy men of God, that were acted by the Spirit of God; and, if I may ſo ſpeak, there we have them in black and white.

4. We would conſider the promiſe as the father of believers, or the mother in a figurative phraſe. Every believer is a child of promiſe: *Now we brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe*, Gal. iv. 28. Not only are we heirs of the promiſe, for that relates to the eſtate, Gal. iii. 29. Heb. vi. 17. and xi. 7, 9.; but children of the promiſe, begotten again to a lively hope through the promiſe. When a poor creature is converted, it is the promiſe of God that does it. The efficacy of the promiſe of God, in its begun performance, does change and renew the heart, Jam. i. 18. 1 Peter. i. 23. The apoſtle, concerning his own converſion, ſays, *It pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,*

Gal. i. 15. It was a kind of ſtrange ſeparation. The poor young man was left of God as eminently as any youth in all Judea; at his beſt he was a ſuperſtitious blinded Jew, and at his worſt a bitter enemy to the name of Jeſus Chriſt. Who would think now this man was ſeparated from his mother's womb for God? he ſeemed to be ſeparated from God, and ſeparated to the vengeance of God. For all this, grace ſeized his heart, and he is called in due time. Theſe things we are to conceive when we ſpeak and think of a promiſing God: the riſe of them, in the purpoſe of God's heart; the channel of all the promiſes, in and through the heart's blood of our Lord Jeſus; recorded to us in the word, and in God's good time applied to the heart, to call in the heirs of promiſe, and to bring them home to poſſeſs their eſtate.

II. The *ſecond* thing is, *What need we have of a promiſing God.* This muſt be a name peculiarly applied unto the God we call upon and believe in. Since ſin hath come into the world, there is an abſolute neceſſity of our having to do with a promiſing God, and of God's dealing with us as a promiſing God, otherwiſe there can be nothing but ruin on our part.

1. Becauſe God cannot be ſavingly known but as a promiſing God. The promiſe of God is both a veil, and a glaſs that we perceive God in. It is a veil upon his inconceivable, unapproachable glory: it is a glaſs wherein we may perceive, and may get near to him. We cannot poſſibly take up any comfortable, ſaving, right apprehenſions of God, but as he is cloathed and veiled to us in a promiſe. His own glory is unapproachable; his juſtice, his majeſty, theſe great attributes of his, are all amazing and confounding to poor creatures. But when God comes near to us, and promiſes great and good things to us, then we come to know him. It is remarkable how Moſes dealt with God, and God dealt with Moſes, Exod. xxxiii.

xxxiii. from ver. 13. to the end. The man is there praying for Iſrael under their great ſin, and under God's great wrath for it: *Shew me now thy way*, ſays he, *that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy ſight.* At laſt he ariſes, *Shew me thy glory*, ver. 18. Whether Moſes was led or left unto an unbecoming deſire, to his deſiring more than his preſent ſtate could permit, we cannot peremptorily ſay. He was in a high degree of communion with God, as any mere man in this world ever was. The Lord anſwered him moſt graciouſly, and fitly to our purpoſe. Moſes prays that he may behold God's glory. What! had he not ſeen enough already? He ſaw, with all the people, the glory of God in the giving of the law; he ſaw a great deal more in his more near approaches to God; he ſaw it yet more in his ſtaying with God forty days in the mount; he ſaw the pattern of the temple in the mount. Moſes yet, for all this, cries, *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy glory*, as if he had never before ſeen any thing of the glory of the Lord. Says the Lord, *I will make all my goodneſs to paſs before thee*, (my greatneſs would confound thee), *and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will ſhew mercy on whom I will ſhew mercy.* Accordingly the Lord proclaimed it, chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. Will you take in now this that I drive at from this quotation, that a clear perceiving by faith of the ſovereign grace and goodneſs of God in his promiſes of grace and compaſſion to poor ſinners, is the moſt beneficial and higheſt diſcovery of divine glory that ſinners can arrive at, and that believers ſhould deſire in this world. When we pray that God would ſhew us his glory, the Lord will underſtand it thus, and anſwer it thus: *I will cauſe all my goodneſs to paſs before thee.* The more we ſee of his goodneſs, the more we ſee of his glory.

2. God cannot be worſhipped acceptably, but as a promiſing God. Says the apoſtle, It is required that every man that comes to God to worſhip, muſt

believe

believe that *God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Hebrews xi. 6.; that he is a gracious God, not only great in his being, but good, and bountiful, and kind, and gracious to them that ſeek him.

3. God cannot be truſted in, unleſs he be known as a promiſing God. Truſt in God, faith in him, is a ſpecial point of worſhip; it is not a duty of worſhip ſo much as it is a grace that ſhould accompany every duty. Now, whence can faith in God ariſe unleſs God ſpeak ſome good to us? Faith ariſing from any other ſpring, is a dream and vain imagination of our own minds, not bottomed upon the ſingle, ſole word of God. *They that know thy name will put their truſt in thee: for thou, Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee*, Pſalm ix. 10. In Jacob's pleading, Gen. xxxii. 9, 13. ſee how exactly he ſtands upon God's word. He not only calls God, the God of his father Abraham, and the God of his father Iſaac, that was a promiſing God; but the God that ſaid unto me, *Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee*, verſe 9. *And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good*, verſe 12. See how Jacob's wreſtling ſtood, how, if I may ſo ſpeak, the man behaved himſelf in his mighty wreſtling with God, all with the force of his word; upon that word of his; ſaith he to the Lord, "Lord, thou bidſt me, I am in the way "thou bidſt me go in; *and thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely* "*do thee good.*"

4. God cannot be loved but as a promiſing God. Love to God is promiſed, and love to God ariſes from the diſcoveries of God's goodneſs to us: and the clearer theſe diſcoveries be, love ſtill increaſes.

5. All the enjoyment we have of God in this life, is enjoying of him as a promiſing God. Pray now which way is it that there is that intercourſe and that familiarity, that mutual dealing between God and us, that is called by thoſe bleſſed names in the word; *fellow-*

fellowſhip with him, *enjoyment of* him, *finding of* him? All ſtands in this; we approach to God by the warrant of his promiſe, he draws near to us according to his promiſe, and in the fulfilment of it. The promiſe is as it were Jacob's ladder, by which God comes down to us, and we riſe up to him again. The communion which believers have on earth is with God as a promiſing God; and the communion the glorified have with him above, is with God as a performing God; and, if I may ſo ſpeak, until God has performed all he has promiſed, he muſt never loſe the name of a promiſing God to a believer.

Laſtly, In the great wiſdom of God, this name of God is appointed to be the great name wherein he will be glorified. The greateſt glory that is given to God, is given under the name of a promiſing God. What is the reaſon that Abraham is eſpecially ſaid to give glory to God? *He was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. Believing is but thinking, it is no more: but it is a rare thing, it is a great thought; and a great many things ſeem far bigger than believing. Doing ſeems to be a great deal greater than believing. Abraham's offering his ſon Iſaac was a great act; ay, but the excellency of it lay in the faith he did it by. The reaſon why believing is ſpecially ſaid to give glory to God, is, becauſe the Lord hath a ſpecial mind and deſign to have himſelf glorified in the ſoul, under the name of a promiſing God: and all good things ſhall come to his people, to make them happy by virtue of the promiſe. But the maker of the promiſe, and the keeper of the promiſe, and the performer of the promiſe, muſt have all the glory. All that is in the promiſe is ours, but all the praiſe of making it is his; it is made by grace, kept by grace, performed by grace; all this glory is to be given to him.

APPLICATION.

APPLICATION.

The *firſt* uſe is this, That the Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God. I therefore call you to inquire and determine before God and your conſciences, whether you do know God under this name. Do you know God as a promiſing God? A great many Chriſtians there are that know no ſuch thing; they are called, but are not really ſo. The acquaintance that moſt Chriſtians have with God, (poor it is), is with him as a commanding God. But if this does not ſettle and fix ordinarily in your thoughts, and in all your dealings with God, *I have now to do with a promiſing God*, all you do is worth nothing.

1. If you have not to do with a promiſing God, you do not know God's mind. There is a great difference, you know, betwixt knowing a man's face, and ſhape of his body, his eſtate, and garb, and houſe, *&c.* and knowing his heart and thoughts, and how he ſtands affected towards us. All other ſpeculations about God are tolerable pieces of philoſophy to them that have no better; but the grand inquiry that ſhould poſſeſs our hearts is, What does this God think of me? What does he intend to do with me? This cannot be known but by the promiſe. Unleſs I have ſome good word from this God to ſhow his good-will towards me, what do I know more than the devils do? for the devils know God better than any men in this world, ſaving that they know God's wrath is againſt them to eternity. But this name, *a promiſing God*, they know nothing of. A great mercy it is that ever God ſhould be known as a promiſing God to ſinful men. God was never revealed as a promiſing God to fallen angels, but he was ſo to fallen man.

2. Unleſs you know God as a promiſing God, you cannot know God in Chriſt; and you do not know the true God, unleſs you do know God in Chriſt; unleſs

leſs your determinate knowledge of God, be of that God that ſhines in his glory to us in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. We muſt look upon no God out of this face; for there is no eye that can perceive God, but as he ſhines this way, 1 John v. 20. ſays the apoſtle, *We know, that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God and eternal life,* 1 John v. 20.

3. If you do not know God as a promiſing God, you know nothing of the marrow and ſubſtance of the bible. Take away God's promiſes out of the bible, and there is nothing left in it, but bones, and ſtones, and poiſon, and darts for poor man. If you do not ſee God as promiſing, you do not know the marrow of the ſcripture; for the heart and marrow of the will of God lies there.

Laſtly, If you do not know God as a promiſing God, you cannot deal with God about ſalvation. Pray now, which way is it that men deal with God about their ſalvation? I do acknowledge, that there are ſome people that make a faſhion of dealing with God about their ſalvation, who do not underſtand the way of God's dealing with them about ſalvation. Such kind of dealers ſpend their time to no purpoſe. All right dealing with God about our ſalvation, is in anſwering of God's dealing with us in that matter. Now, all the Lord's way of dealing with us about ſalvation is by his promiſes; he promiſes eternal life, he ſends this promiſe to us in the goſpel; we muſt lay hold on or we cannot deal with God, as he deals with us, Pſal. xxvii. 8. Eph. iv. 32. Rom. iv. 13. Hoſ. ii. 23.

Secondly, I would add an exhortation or two unto Chriſtians. Is the Chriſtian's God a promiſing God? Keep always this name of God in your heart and eye. You will find no great cauſe in this work; it is a hard

work to keep God as a promiſing God ſtill in the eye, but it is very needful.

1ſt, Do not you find God began with you this way, and you began this way with God? You that are true Chriſtians, that have been born again, that have been tranſplanted out of the old ſtock into the new, do not you know ſomething of this, that as long as God was known to you only as a commanding God, and as a threatening God, there was nothing but death, and ruin, and damnation in your eye? but when he was revealed as a promiſing God, then light, and life, and hope, and liberty began to ariſe. Was there ever a diſtreſſed conſcience in the world truly pacified without a promiſe? If it were without a promiſe from God, the devil was the doctor, and the diſeaſe is worſe than ever it was. If ever thou haſt been afraid of the wrath of God for thy ſin, if thy mind has been quiet without a promiſe of God through Chriſt Jeſus, you are but dreaming ſtill; ſuch a cure is worſe than the diſeaſe. The apoſtle tells us how it was with him; *When the commandment* came, ſays he, *ſin revived, and I died*, Rom. vii. 8, 9. There was woful work when the commandment came. When God is only known to you as a commanding God, ſins grow greater, and appear exceeding ſinful; but when grace comes, when the promiſe comes, the matter is altered, the priſoner is reſcued. *Before faith came*, ſays he, *we were kept under the law*, Gal. iii. 21.----24. We were priſoners till Chriſt came, and the promiſe came, and faith came; for they are all three come together. Chriſt comes by the promiſes, and the promiſes are received by faith, and the priſoner is made whole by faith.

2dly, You muſt mind this conſtantly, for all believers muſt live by faith; and if ſo be we are called to live by faith, ſurely we muſt remember that God is a promiſing God; this is neceſſarily implied. To live by faith, implies theſe four things. (1.) That a poor believer in himſelf is a poor empty creature; he hath

hath nothing at home to live by in his houſe, Iſa. iii. 7. And ſince there is no bread within, he muſt live abroad. (2.) It implies, that the ſtock that a believer is to live upon is elſewhere; it is without him, it is with God in Chriſt, Col. iii. 3. (3.) It implies, that there are ways, iſſues, vents, by which he may go out for it, or it may come into him; paſſages by which communication of this fulneſs in Chriſt comes in to the actual poſſeſſion of the believer. There were no living by faith, unleſs the ſtock that is in Chriſt had ways of venting itſelf, of being brought down unto the hand, unto the uſe and benefit of the poor believer; and this is by the promiſe. And therefore it follows, (4.) That the daily and conſtant work of a believer, is to be pleading theſe promiſes for his ſupply. *I live*, ſaith the apoſtle, *yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, Gal. ii. 20. *Laſtly*, He finds the good of it, Pſal. xxvii. 3. and xxviii. 7.

Laſtly, Mind this frequently, that God is a promiſing God; for as you muſt live by faith on a promiſing God, ſo you muſt die and go before him under this name. The great appearance muſt be ventured upon under this name. There are few folks, Sirs, that are ſo happy, as to make their approaches to God by faith, with that dread, and reverence, and awe, that the laſt approach requires: we ſhould then act firm faith frequently; we muſt die in this, with this God in our eye, as a promiſing God. We have a remarkable inſtance of this in thoſe two good men, the father and the ſon, good Jacob 147 years old, and good Joſeph 110 years old: *Behold*, ſaith Jacob to Joſeph, *I die, but God ſhall be with you*, Geneſis xlviii. 21. and xlix. 25. with Luke ii. 30. as if Joſeph had learned it of his father, he tells his brethren that ſurvived him, when he came to die, Gen. l. 24. *I die*, ſays he, *and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he ſware to Abra-*

ham, &c. As if theſe two holy patriarchs had ſaid, "Now we die, but our promiſing God lives ſtill, and "the promiſe lives, and will have its accompliſhment "in due time." It is upon this, that David amongſt his laſt words ſpake that great word, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God; yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure.* An ill-ordered houſe, but a well-ordered covenant; many things amiſs in the one, but nothing amiſs in the other, ſaid the believer. So muſt you die, breathing out, 1. Your ſoul, Pſal. xxxi. 5. 2. Leaving your body in the duſt, Pſal. xvi. 9. 3. Your preſent enjoyments, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 4. All your ſinful infirmities.

The *ſecond* exhortation is this, Make uſe of this name of God as a promiſing God, carefully and wiſely. How you ſhould uſe this name of God, I would inſtruct you in a few things.

1. In all your extremities mind this name only.

2. In all your walk, or ordinary caſes, mind it mainly.

1. In all your extremities mind this name of God only; there is no other name then to be minded. There are two ſorts of extremities that Chriſtians feel; and it is their great wiſdom, when in them, to uſe this name. *1ſt*, There are great extremities of conſcience. *2dly*, Extremities of diſtreſs and diſpenſations. In extremities of conſcience, people muſt be very careful to remember no name of God, but the name of the promiſing God; all is terrifying but only this. I hinted but juſt now, that the promiſe of the goſpel is the only plaiſter for a wounded conſcience, and when God lays it on and bleſſes it, it is marvellous what a ſudden cure it will do. Health and peace quickly will follow this application. In extremities of diſtreſs, it is to be only minded, when people are borne down quite, and know not what to do. Saith Jehoſhaphat, *If when evil cometh upon us, we cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help*,

2 Chron.

2 Chron. xx. 9. Good Hezekiah was a follower of him in this practice, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. *O Lord*, ſays he, *I am oppreſſed, undertake for me.* I may allude to the meaning of the word; undertaking there is undertaking as a ſurety; I may compare it with the ſame his great-grandfather David uſeth, Pſalm cxix. 122. *Be ſurety for thy ſervant.* O what a prayer is that! The good man is in deep diſtreſs; as if he ſhould ſay, "My word ſignifies nothing before God, nor men, "nor devils; it will not pacify God, nor quiet con- "ſcience, nor ſtop the devil's mouth: *Lord, be ſure-* "*ty for thy ſervant*, ſpeak a good word for me, thou "art a promiſing God." It is great boldneſs of faith for a believer to come to God to paſs his word for him, to be ſurety for him.

2. In ordinary caſes, we muſt mind this mainly. There are ſeveral other names of God by which he is known to us in the word; and in his dealings with us, we muſt give them their due room; but this muſt be the main ſtill. As for inſtance, God is known to us as a commanding Lord and God, that reveals his will about our work and duty, hath proclaimed his mind, and calls for our obedience. Your duty with reſpect to this is, 1*ſt*, Take the commands of God out of the hand of a promiſing God: This is not a bare commanding God, but it is a promiſing God that does command me. And unleſs you look thus on God's law, you may quickly over-ſtreſs yourſelves in your endeavours after obedience, and yet do nothing to any purpoſe. See how obſervable this is in the giving of the law. God's glory was diſplayed, Iſrael and Moſes trembling, Heb. xii. 15, &c. yet I am your God. *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage;* thou ſhalt do ſo and ſo. Obſerve now the preface to the commandments, (ſee Deut. xxvi. 16,---19.) It is not, Thou ſhalt do ſo and ſo, and then I will be thy God; the Lord does not firſt reveal himſelf to them as a commanding God, and promiſe that, upon their

their obedience, he will become a promiſing God; but he reveals himſelf as a promiſing God, and upon that requires their obedience to him as a commanding God: *Becauſe I was thy God, I brought thee out of the land of Egypt;* and after I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, I tell thee my mind about thy duty. Oh that ſome Chriſtians (if I may ſo ſpeak), could find as much goſpel in the preaching of the goſpel, as is plainly here in the preface of the law; but ſome will make goſpel-promiſes come in after obedience to goſpel-precepts. There is no obedience that ever was performed by man rightly, nor graciouſly accepted by God, but that obedience that was performed to the commands of God, as a promiſing God. Again, we are not only to take a command out of his hand, as a promiſing God, but we are to turn the commands back again, for grace to perform them, Pſal. cxix. 6, 7, 8. As ſoon as ever God reveals his mind to us about our duty by a command, we are immediately to turn the command upon him in prayer: *Lord, perform thy word; write them in my heart, that I may keep them,* for that is the promiſe; Pſal. cxliii. 10. What a great word is that, *Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God!* It is not, to know or love thy will, though that is needed and begged, Pſalm cxix.; it is not, Teach me to do thy will, that thou mayſt be my God; but, *Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.* Faith in God animates his prayer for grace, to yield obedience to it. God reveals himſelf ſometimes to us as a threatening God. Threatenings and promiſes ſeem to be very croſs to one another. It is the promiſing God that does threaten, and the Lord knows very well how to make his promiſes and his threatenings agree together, if we were wiſe to make them agree together in our faith. *If his children forſake my law,* &c. *I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him,* &c. Pſalm lxxxix. 30,—34. It were well

for

for us, if we were as able to believe the standing of promises, and the love in his heart, notwithstanding the threatenings and the strokes of his hand; if we could in some measure do that, as well as he can make all his ways towards us to be mercy and truth. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies*, Psal. xxv. 10. We cannot easily see it, but God can easily do it. Sometimes God is manifesting himself to his people as a *hiding God;* that is a sad discovery, if it should be properly such; but it is a name of God oft known: *Verily*, saith the church, *thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour*, Isaiah xlv. 15. *I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him*, Isa. viii. 17. Job xxiii. 3,---13. The sum of all this now is, that this name of God, *the promising God*, is the leading name that should mainly be minded by Christians in all his appearances. We take his commands, threatenings, rods, and corrections, we must use them all, as remembering, that all these are from a *promising God.* If the commands were alone without a promise, who could perform them? If the threatenings were alone without a promise to sweeten them, and take away the poison of them, who could endure them? But all this is consistent with his love, and therefore should not shake the faith of a believer.

SERMON

SERMON V.

HEBREWS x. 23.

He is faithful that promiſed.

YOU have heard again and again, that theſe words are the argument by which the apoſtle preſſeth the exhortation unto the duty, of Chriſtians *holding faſt their profeſſion of faith without wavering.* The argument is ſtrong in itſelf, and pertinent to the apoſtle's ſcope, and is an argument that has a great deal of good truth in it, with reſpect to its contents. I have ſhewn what is in theſe words, *He is faithful that promiſes.* I firſt ſpake laſt day to this truth, *That a Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God.* The name the apoſtle here gives him is, *He that promiſeth.* He promiſeth like himſelf, like a God. He is known by his promiſes.

The *ſecond* thing that I am now to ſpeak to is this, *That this promiſing God is faithful in his promiſes: He is faithful that promiſes.* This is a name of God frequently given to him in the word, both in the old and new teſtament. The prophet hath a great word about it, Lam. iii. 23. *Great is thy faithfulneſs. His mercies are renewed towards us every morning. His compaſſions fail not.* In the new teſtament it is frequently uſed alſo: 1 Cor. i. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* 1 Theſſ. v. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it.* 2 Theſſ. iii. 3. *But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you and keep you from evil.* And I name theſe rather in the new teſtament, becauſe in all theſe three places that I have named, the word in the Greek is the ſame with that

that in my text. This is a name of God that all believers know, and all that would be believers muſt ſtudy. There is never a believer in the world but knows that God is faithful; and if they knew it better, they would be better believers; and no man can be a believer, till he know that his God is faithful. There is no truſt given to him, till his truſtineſs be known.

I ſhall therefore, in handling this name of the Lord our God, *A faithful God that promiſes*, give you, *Firſt*, The meaning of it. *Secondly*, The grounds of it: the meaning, that you may underſtand it; and the grounds of it, that you may believe it the better.

I. The meaning of this word, this name of God, *that he is faithful*, contains theſe things.

1. He promiſeth who purpoſeth, neither raſhly nor haſtily. All his promiſes are from eternity.

2. God ſpeaks as he thinks. It is one of the greateſt and worſt pieces of diſhoneſty in promiſing, when people promiſe what they think never to do; that is lying. There is lying in promiſing, when people do not intend to perform; as well as in aſſerting that to be true, when they know it to be falſe. The wiſe man takes notice that there are ſuch kind of folks in the world, Prov. xxiii. 7. But when God promiſes, he ſpeaks as he thinks.

3. God is faithful in this ſenſe, that he remembers always what he ſays. There are ſome raſh folks that promiſe a great deal more than they perform, becauſe they forget a great deal of what they promiſed. Our Lord never forgets a word of his promiſe. Whenever he has made a promiſe to a believer, it is fixed perpetually in his heart. Forgetfulneſs is not to be aſcribed to God. I know believers ſometimes, in fits of unbelief, have charged God this way: *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Will the promiſe fail for evermore?* So in the Hebrew, Pſalm lxxvii. 7. But that is the infirmity of the ſpeaker. We find ſometimes alſo, the people of God putting God in

of his promiſes; yea the Lord calling them ſo to do: *Put me in remembrance*, Iſa. xliii. 26. But this putting God in remembrance is required of us, and to be performed by us, not to help God's memory, but to exerciſe our faith: *Keep not ſilence, till he eſtabliſh and make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth*, Iſa. lxii. 6. *Remember*, ſays the pſalmiſt, *the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, Pſal. cxix. 49. The Spirit of God tells us of the exactneſs of God's remembrance many times. His mercy towards his people is expreſſed this way. This is one of his names, *He remembers his mercy to them that fear him. He is mindful of his covenant*, Pſalm cxi. 5. Nay, as to his people, it is ſpoken alſo, Mal. iii. 16. that there was *a book of remembrance written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord, and thought on his name.* I argue from that, that if ſo be the Lord keeps ſo exact an account of the poor ſlender thoughts that his poor people have of him, how much more will he keep a good remembrance of all his own precious thoughts concerning them, and of all the good words he paſſeth to them: Pſalm xl. 5. and cxxxix. 17.

4. God is faithful in this ſenſe, that he never changeth his mind. Poor frail men may ſometimes promiſe with an honeſt mind, and they may ſee good reaſon for the changing of it. Sometimes it is lawful to change in ſome caſes, ſometimes not. There may be ſin in giving a raſh promiſe, that may be greater than the breaking of it. The Lord never changes his mind. Balaam is called a falſe prophet by Peter; but the meaning is, he was not a falſe prophet in his propheſying, but a falſe prophet that propheſied. The Spirit of God ſpake by him, but never touched the graceleſs man's heart: *God is not a man, that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man that he ſhould repent: hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* Numb. xxiii. 19. Job xxiii. 13. God never changeth his mind, never comes to be in another mind, than that wherein he made

made his promiſe unto his poor children. Whatever changes there be in his diſpenſations, there is no change in his mind. *If his children forſake my law*, &c. *I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes.* Here is a great change in God's diſpenſations; inſtead of heaping loving-kindneſs upon them, he is viſiting them with rods and ſtripes. *Nevertheleſs, my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail*, &c. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David*, Pſalm lxxxix. 30,----35.

Laſtly, God is faithful in promiſing, becauſe he always performs what he promiſes; he always does as he ſays, ſpeaks as he thinks, remembers what he ſays, never changes his mind, and always performs his word. What the teſtimony was, that Joſhua exacted of the conſciences of the Iſraelites, when he poſſeſſed the land of Canaan, our true Joſhua, Jeſus, will exact and get of all the true Iſrael, when they come to the true Canaan: Joſhua xxiii. 14. *And ye know*, ſays he, *in all your hearts, and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.* This is briefly the meaning of this great name of the Lord our God, a faithful God, faithful in his promiſes.

II. The *ſecond* thing is, to give you ſome grounds for our faith concerning this; for it is no ſmall matter to have a firm faith of God's faithfulneſs. All faith is bottomed upon the promiſes, and all faith in the promiſes is founded upon the faithfulneſs of the maker of them. Though the promiſe be never ſo good, yet if the maker of the promiſe be not faithful, it is no ſecurity to the man that gets it.

I am to ſhew what grounds there are that we may uſe, and are given us in the word of God, for the clearing our underſtanding, and fixing our faith on this name of God: *That this promiſer is faithful.*

1. The *firſt* I ſhall name is taken from the *nature of God*. Faithfulneſs is inſeparable from his nature, as inſeparable as any other name that can be given him. Omnipotency is of the nature of God; a weak God is no God, but an idol. Truth and faithfulneſs are in the nature of a god; a falſe god is an idol. Therefore, when the apoſtle would aggravate unbelief, goſpel-unbelief, he aggravates it by this: *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*, 1 John v. 10 What is it to make God a liar? It is impoſſible for a creature to do ſo; but they account him ſo, that is the meaning of it. When we do not take God's promiſe, it is to make God a liar, it is to make God a devil; for the devil *is a liar, and the father of it*, John viii. 44. See what rank wickedneſs there is in unbelief, Jerem. xv. 18. Pſalm lxxvii. 7,---10.

2. We find this, the *unchangeableneſs of God* is another ground of his faithfulneſs: *With whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning*, James i. 17. Changing is always a creature infirmity; it is impoſſible for a creature but to be changeable. Unchangeableneſs is a divine property, and cannot be communicated to any creature. Changing is twofold, *1ſt*, From worſe to better. *2dly*, From better to worſe. Neither of which can be in him. Whatever there is of fixedneſs in the ſtate of believers, it is not unchangeableneſs; but it is a communicated ſecurity by the grace of God the giver of it. All queſtioning of the promiſes of God always charges him with being changeable. He is the ſame that he was, whatever the unbeliever, or the unbelieving, doubtful believer may think. He is ſo as to eſtabliſhed angels, and ſaints in glory now, and to eternity.

3. The great room that *grace* hath in the promiſes, is one good ground for our faith, as to the faithfulneſs of God in the making of them. And this is twofold.

fold. *1st*, Grace is the spring of all the promises. *2dly*, The glory of grace is the design of all the making of promises, and performance of all the promises: *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed*, Rom. iv. 16. It is by promise; this promise is by grace, that it may be sure to all the seed. If the promise were given upon any other account, and did flow from any other spring but the grace of God, it might grow dry. If God promised to us upon the account of any condition that might be wrought by us, the promise might not be sure; but this springing from the goodwill and grace of God himself, as long as that remains they must stand. The design of all the performance of promises is the glory of grace. Our Lord speaks many good words to us in the scripture, he makes these warm sometimes upon the hearts of his people in their faith; and at last, when all these good words shall come to good deeds, and shall shine forth in their glory, what a wonderful sight will that be, to see every poor believer have in his face, his heart, his soul, and body, all the promises of God fulfilled to him! Then the question will be, Why hath God done all this? why hath he rescued, and scraped, as it were, a company of vile sinners out of the bottom of hell, to fill them with so much glory, and that to eternity; all to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein we are accepted in the Beloved? Therefore are we adopted, therefore are we elected, therefore are we justified, therefore are we sanctified, and therefore are we glorified, that it might be *to the glory of his grace*, Eph. i. 4,----14. and ii. 7.

5. The great room Jesus Christ hath in the promises in one ground of our faith, that God is faithful in them, and that they shall be fulfilled. Christ's room in the covenant is so great, that in effect he is it, and he is called the *covenant*, Isa. xlix. 8. and xlii. 6. He is also called the *promise*, when the Father sent him into the world: *He hath raised up an horn of salvation*

vation for us, ſays Zacharias, Luke i. 69. Chriſt's intereſt in the covenant and in the promiſe is great: they are ſaid by the apoſtle to be all *in him yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. God's glory wants ſinners to work upon. If there were not loſt ſinners in this world, promiſes of grace could have none to work upon. If we were all perfectly holy, what hath the promiſe of forgiveneſs to do in this world. Says the apoſtle, They *are all in him yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us*. We in our ſins, infirmities, weakneſſes, are the field wherein the glory of God's promiſes is diſplayed and advanced, and all this in Chriſt Jeſus. Chriſt's intereſt in the promiſe is threefold. *1ſt*, Chriſt hath bought all the bleſſings in the promiſe, and all the heirs of the promiſe; he hath bought us for the promiſe, and the bleſſings for us. His intereſt then muſt be very great. There is never a bleſſing that a poor believer partakes of, but Chriſt's blood went for it; it went for your daily bread, and for more grace and glory. He is bleſſed that believes, that his outward mercies and afflictions, *&c.* are all by promiſe. Whatever we have is by promiſe and purpoſe, Phil. i. 29. And never man received a promiſe, but he that Chriſt bought to be the heir of it. We are heirs of promiſe, becauſe in Chriſt Jeſus. We are all *the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus; and if children, then heirs*, Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iii. 29. *2dly*, Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath this intereſt in the promiſes, that his blood went for the confirming of the whole covenant. The whole book of the promiſes, Chriſt's blood ſealed it all; therefore it is called *the blood of the everlaſting covenant*. The teſtament of the covenant is made ſure by the blood of the teſtator; no man muſt add any thing to it. There is a curſe unto them that ſhall add or pare any thing from the whole canon of ſcripture, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. How much more unſufferable to add or pare from our Lord's teſtament?

tament? The *covenant was confirmed before of God in Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 17. By his mediation at laſt, as mediator of the covenant, he confirmed it by his blood. 3*dly*, A *third* intereſt that Chriſt hath in the covenant is, that he is *the ſurety of it*. He is to ſee the bargain kept on both ſides, that God may not caſt us off for our iniquities, and that we may not leave God by our unbelief. Chriſt is engaged on both; and, if I may ſo ſpeak, he has a hard taſk of it, to keep devouring juſtice from conſuming ſtubble fully dry. It is a taſk only fit for him, and he only fit for it; a taſk he chearfully undertook and perfectly fulfilled, and is now fulfilling.

6. The high engagements of divine truth in the promiſes, are great confirmations for our faith in God's faithfulneſs. Promiſes are made by the Lord ſo deliberately; he goes ſo high in them, that we muſt believe he is faithful, and will perform them. See how the apoſtle diſcourſes to the Hebrews, chap. vi. when he is exhorting believers to be followers of them *who through faith and patience have inherited the promiſes:* as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "*Be not ſlothful*, "take pains, follow on; all thoſe that have tried this "courſe of faith and patience, have inherited the "promiſes. And ſo will you:" why ſo? becauſe when God made the promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſwore by himſelf; ſaying, *Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs thee*, &c. There are ſeveral things of great conſideration in that ſcripture. 1*ſt*, That there is double ſecurity, word, and oath. The leaſt hint of good-will from ſo great a God, as our God is, ſhould engage all the dependence of his children; nay, if it came but to only a may-be, God's may-be is enough for our reverend waiting on him. God not only ſpeaks, but he ſwears. Now obſerve, how the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf;* as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If it had been poſſible for God to have gone "higher, he would have gone higher." How does

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God ſwear by himſelf? *As I live;* he ſwears by his *life;* he ſwears by his *being;* he ſwears by his *Godhead.* As true as I am God, *I will bleſs thee,* ſays he to Abraham. What is all this to us now? God teſtifies a ſingular reſpect unto an eminent man, upon a ſingular teſtimony of the man's reſpect to him; one of the moſt eminent acts of faith, and of obedience that ever was performed by a mere man, to offer up freely to God his only ſon now grown a man. Here was a noble act of obedience; but the Lord teſtifies a ſpecial regard to this man, and gives him this oath. What is that to you and me? Now, ſays the apoſtle, this concerns you and me, that *have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us;* he leads us to this, that every poor creature that has a mind for ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould ſay in himſelf, As ſure as God ſaid and ſwore to Abraham, ſo ſurely hath God ſaid and ſworn to me, that I ſhall be bleſſed with eternal ſalvation in flying for refuge to his own Son. So the apoſtle applies it, *That by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us.* Obſerve the vaſt difference. Abraham yields a grand act of obedience, and lifts up his knife to cut the throat of his own ſon at God's command: A poor ſinner what does he? A ſinner chaſed by the torments of his own conſcience, and the threatenings of the law; he runs to Chriſt for ſalvation: he is a ſelf-ſeeker, if I may ſo ſpeak; he is ſeeking the ſalvation of his own ſoul; nay, ſays the apoſtle, He that does ſo, ſhall get that ſame ſecurity for his ſalvation that Abraham got. It is a great point, and only fit for Paul's divinity, to ſpell ſo great a matter out of that extraordinary teſtimony that God gave to Abraham. Though the ſervice that God craved of Abraham be not craved of us, yet the privilege is allowed to every believer; ſo that if you fly to Chriſt Jeſus, there is not a poor believer,

ver, that hath laid hold on the horns of God's altar. but that poor creature shall be as sure of God's eternal blessing as great Abraham was, when he heard God swearing to him. This is what the apostle teaches; the Lord help us to practise it.

7. There is *divine foresight* of all possible and future impediments of performance, which is a great argument of God's faithfulness. That proves to us, that God is faithful in his promises. An honest man may make a promise upon his best understanding, but the providence of God may render it quite impossible to perform it. Now, there is no such thing can befal the Lord our God. Here is a great argument for your faith in God's faithfulness; he foresaw all things that shall come, or can come to pass, that look like impediments. All your sinning, all your fainting, all your unbelief, all your murmurings, all your turnings and temptings of the Lord, poor believer, they were all foreseen by God, yet he made the promise, and therefore he will keep it. I believe we are such poor believers, that if we had the foresight of all that comes in the way to hinder, we would never believe. A poor believer, if in the day that he gives the hand unto the Lord, in the day that he marries his soul unto Christ Jesus, in the day that he engages to expect life, and righteousness, and salvation in this holy One of Israel; I say, if this man, could foresee all the sin, and all the miscarriages and weaknesses that will be found in him for but seven years to come, he would draw back his hand, and be ashamed to say, *I believe.* The reason why I say so is this, because when a few of these come in our way, they shake our faith. The children of God have one advantage in their weakness, that our future things are hid from us; things that shall come to pass we do not know, but the Lord sees them all, and in sight of them all he makes the promise, and therefore, notwithstanding them all, he keeps the promise, Isa. xlviii. 18, 19. and Psal. lxix. 5.

8. The *mighty power of God* is that which we ſhould ground our faith of his faithfulneſs upon. *Omnipotency* muſt be engaged to fulfil the *promiſes*, and omnipotency muſt be acted upon in believing the promiſe: 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.* Abraham offered up his ſon Iſaac, accounting that God was able to raiſe him from the dead. He had a promiſe, *That in Iſaac his ſeed ſhould be called;* God bid Abraham cut his throat, and burn (not bury) his body: ſays Abraham, "That I will do," accounting that he was able to raiſe him up from the dead. How frequently do we find faith fixed this way upon divine power? Rom. xi. 23. As to the Jews, they ſhall be grafted in; why ſo? God is able to graft them in: as to a weak believer, it is far more eaſy, Rom. xiv. 4. *He ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand.* Sirs, your faith will never behave well, till you have a view of omnipotency. That faith is never ſoundly tried, till it is brought into that diſtreſs that nothing but omnipotency can relieve out of; and that faith is not cleanly acted, that does not act purely upon omnipotency. Wherefore do I believe the promiſe? Becauſe he is the Lord of hoſts, for whom nothing is too hard, that promiſes; it is with this the Lord chides Sarah's unbelief, *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Gen. xviii. 4. Jer. xxxii. 17, 27.

Laſtly, There is ſomething in the *very nature of the promiſes* that ſpeaks forth the certainty of their fulfilment. Ye may know by the nature of the promiſes, that he is a faithful God that made them. One is the *abſoluteneſs* of the main promiſe. That I call an abſolute promiſe, wherein the whole of the care and charge is God's. When God ſays *I will*, they ſhall; *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people;* and if I will be your God, no man ſhall ſay he ſhall not be my God; and if thou ſay, We ſhall be thy people,

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none shall say, We shall not be thy people. There is again the *wisdom of the order of the promises*, that there is some begun performance of the promises; the performance of the promise of grace is in a good way to the performance of the promise of glory.

APPLICATION.

1. Learn to magnify this name. God hath magnified it himself, and so should we; Psal. xxviii. 2. *I will praise thy name, for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.* Magnifying of God's faithfulness stands principally in praising for it. Praise him for all the promises he hath made, and praise him for all the performance he hath given, and praise him for all the performance that shall be given.

2. As you must praise him for it, so *you must count God faithful.* This is a great matter. May I speak it in more plain homely words: Every one of you must count *God honest*, an *honest*, *faithful*, *true God*; that never deceived any that trusted in him, that is never worse than his word; always a great deal better. It is remarked concerning Sarah, Heb. xi. 11. that *she judged him faithful who had promised.* She is one of the women that are named there in that short catalogue of believers; and it is well for her she was named there, for indeed the account we have of her in Genesis is not so much to her honour; when the promise is made in Genesis, it is said, *Sarah laughed*, Gen. xviii. 12. and xvii. 17.

When do ye think Sarah believed? I really think she believed when she was reproved for her unbelief. What is her believing called? *Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, because she judged him faithful who had promised.* She accounted the promiser faithful, that is faith; to account the promises faithful, that is believing. Is it not a reasonable thing to crave this of you? You must ac-

count him faithful or unfaithful, there is no medium: if you do not give him the poſitive teſtimony of faithfulneſs, you reflect upon him the blaſphemy of unfaithfulneſs. Now this would bring me to the third thing, *viz.* That the faith of believers ſhould in ſome meaſure anſwer the faithfulneſs of God. See that your believing anſwer the promiſe, as your believing is bottomed upon the promiſe. See Acts xvi. 15. Lydia's charge to Paul.

This accounting him faithful craves two things; 1*ſt*, That you muſt learn, in the main matter of ſalvation, to take his word alone. We reckon always, that that perſon is jealous of another, that is not willing to take his word. It is true, that, on earth, men may pretend prudence for their diſtruſt; but in dealing with God, it is an abomination, a prudence that comes from hell, James iii. 15. If we account him faithful that promiſes, we ſhould ſeek no more, and ſhould crave no more. Believers that have their multiplied props from ſenſe for their faith, labour under the diſadvantage of a ſecret charge of unfaithfulneſs in God. Will you offer to bring any creature to confirm God's teſtimony? 2*dly*, Account him faithful that exacts this of us, that as ſoon as ever we get the promiſe, we ſhould rejoice in hope of performance. *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice*, ſays David; "I have got God's word, that is enough "of joy to me;" Pſal. lx. 6.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promised.

FROM the last words of this verse, which is the apostle's argument to press Christians *to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering*, I have spoke already unto two notes that I observed therefrom; as, 1. It is a name here given to God, *he that promises;* and from this I shewed, that the Christian's God is a promising God, and he that knows not God by this name *of a promising God*, does not know the true God; no man can take up God aright, but in the veil of a promise; no man can draw near to God aright, but in and by the encouragement of a promise.

2. The second note was this, That this *promising God is faithful in his promises*, this promiser is faithful. To this I spoke last day, and shall add but a little to it, and proceed to the third thing.

I know that there are a great many professors that bear the name of Christians, (God knows how little they deserve it, to him they stand or fall), who wonder, why there should be so much in the word spoken of faith; and that some ministers, in their doctrine should insist so much upon believing: Why not, say they, upon doing? Is not believing doing? The greatest doing that ever was done by a sinner is believing, and all the right doing of obedience flows from believing. Whoever they be that know what it is to be a Christian, know that their life is a life of faith; they live by faith, even as we live our natural life by breathing. It is as impossible, that a Chris-

Chriſtian can preſerve his ſpiritual life, without repeated acts of believing, as it is for us to preſerve our natural life, without putting forth and ſucking in the air we breathe in. Therefore it is, that ſuch as know what the life of faith is, that is, the Chriſtian's life, never can think enough, they never can hear enough, becauſe they can never do enough about believing. For this end, I have ſpoke unto this great name of the Lord our God, That *he is faithful in his promiſes.* I did laſt day, 1. Shew you what the meaning of this is, what our thoughts of God's faithfulneſs do contain by the warrant of the word, and I gave you four particulars. Next, I ſhewed you the grounds, rather of your faith on God's faithfulneſs, than the grounds of his faithfulneſs. The pſalmiſt leads us to this, Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. *Thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name.* God makes all his name ſome way ſerviceable for the advancement of the glory of his word, and his faithfulneſs in his word is a main part of the glory of it. Several of the names of God that are uſeful for the ſtrengthening of our faith, as to his faithfulneſs, I mentioned laſt day; and ſhall add two or three more, and go forward.

1. The firſt is his *holineſs.* His holineſs is a great ground of faith as to his faithfulneſs: *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice,* ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſalm lx. 6. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David,* Pſalm lxxxix. 35. Holineſs is a name of God hateful to all ſinners, and very awful to believers. When the purity, the ſpotleſſneſs of his holineſs is ſeen, what ſad reflections uſually does it occaſion? *But thou art holy*: *But I am a worm,* ſays the pſalmiſt, *and no man,* Pſalm xxii. 3. and 6. When God's holineſs was proclaimed before Iſaiah, *Wo is me,* ſays he, *for I am undone,* chap. vi. 5. Can there be any encouragement for faith from God's holineſs? A great many Chriſtians main fear ariſes from his holineſs. Now I am to ſhow you, that the name of his holineſs is a great conſideration for ſtrengthening

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ing faith. Faithfulneſs, if I may ſo call it, is a piece of holineſs; faithfulneſs is a branch of holineſs, ſo that as God cannot do any thing that is evil, ſo he cannot break his word. Then he ſwears by his holineſs; as if he would ſay, "Take me for no holy God, "if ever I fall ſhort of my word of promiſe."

2. The ſecond name of God is his *wiſdom.* He makes promiſes in wiſdom; he makes promiſes about bleſſings that he means to give, and knows, and hath appointed when and how to perform. We, that are poor creatures, that live in time, think a little time a long while, *viz.* from the beginning of the promiſe in Gen. iii. 15. unto the end of time, and that is a great while after the end of the Revelation. You think it a long while betwixt God's firſt promiſe, and his laſt performance; but it is nothing with him, in the point of promiſe. Saith the apoſtle, *One day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day,* 2 Peter iii. 8. and Iſa. liv. 8. There are a great many ten thouſand days in a thouſand years; there is a great inequality betwixt theſe, but both alike to God. We meaſure time, as it were, by our own duration; but he that inhabiteth eternity does not ſo. The wiſe God, I ſay, hath made all his promiſes in wiſdom. In his eye, betwixt the making of them and the performance of them, there is no kind of diſtance at all.

3. *Laſtly,* The name of his *love* is a great encouragement to faith in his faithfulneſs. Love made the promiſes, and love will ſee to the fulfilling of them; therefore the Pſalmiſt ſays, *I will praiſe thy name, for thy loving-kindneſs, and for thy truth,* Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. The more love there be in making the promiſe, the more certainty there is of the fulfilment of it. Surely promiſes of love, free love, rich and eternal love, are made in love, Jer. xxxi. 3. and will be fulfilled.

III. The *third* thing now that I would ſpeak upon, and that I obſerved from theſe words, *He is faithful that*

that promiſes, is, *That the believer's faith ſhould anſwer God's faithfulneſs.* The ſtedfaſtneſs of our believing ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in promiſing; for this is the apoſtle's argument, *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith*, or the confeſſion of our hope, *without wavering; for he is faithful that promiſed.* Your hope is fixed upon his promiſes: hold faſt your faith therefore, for he will hold faſt his word: *He is faithful that promiſes.* Be you ſtedfaſt in believing; the promiſe is a ſtrong promiſe; it is the promiſe of a ſtrong God: that faith that ſhould be given to it, ſhould be a ſtrong faith. This is the glory of believing. Abraham gave glory to God. What way? He was ſtrong in faith; and he was fully perſuaded that the promiſe would hold good, for God was able to perform it, Rom. iv. 20. From this truth I would ſpeak a little to theſe two things. 1. Why our faith muſt anſwer God's faithfulneſs. 2. How it can do it.

Firſt, Why the believer's faith muſt anſwer God's faithfulneſs.

1. The *firſt* reaſon is, becauſe faith and God's faithfulneſs are relatives; they are neceſſarily related one to another. There were no uſe for divine faithfulneſs declared, no promiſe in time had been made, unleſs for ſome that ſhould believe, John xvii. 20.; there were no uſe in this world for faith, if there were not ſome appearance of divine faithfulneſs for faith to act upon. God's faithfulneſs is revealed on purpoſe that it may be believed. Faith is given on purpoſe, that divine faithfulneſs may be truſted in, and reſted on, and applied. They relate one to another as neceſſarily as the eye and light do, and theſe are mighty like. If God had created creatures with eyes, and colours, or any other viſible things, and no light to ſee by, it might be ſaid, Wherefore gave he them eyes? The caſe is juſt ſo here: All the breakings forth of divine faithfulneſs are for faith's ſake, that

that it may work upon it; and all the giving of faith is for faithfulneſs ſake, that it may act upon it.

2. Divine faithfulneſs is the ground of faith, and the only ground of faith, therefore faith muſt anſwer it. All the expectations of good from God, all the warm applications made to God, are all bottomed upon, *Thus ſaith the Lord.* If God's faithfulneſs be the ground of faith, ſurely then faith ſhould anſwer the ground. If ſo be a perſon could believe as firmly, and build as ſtrongly as the ground will bear him, he might do great things.

3. God's faithfulneſs is the author of faith; it is not only the ground of faith, that lays us under an obligation to believe when he ſpeaks, but the very author and worker of faith. I do not mean only that God grants and works faith in his faithfulneſs; but my meaning is more ſtrict, that all faith is wrought in the ſoul by ſome diſcovery of divine faithfulneſs at firſt, and in all the after-actings of it. We ſee that there are great multitudes that have the word of God alike, they have the ſame bible, and the ſame miniſters, and the ſame ſermons; ſome believe, and ſome do not believe; ſome obtain grace to believe, and others not. Whence comes it? Wherefore is it, that ever at any time a poor ſelf-condemned ſinner truſts Chriſt Jeſus with his ſalvation upon the warrant of the goſpel-promiſe? when is it he does ſo? Always then, and never till then, that he gets a diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God in the contrivance of the goſpel. When God ſtamps his own faithfulneſs and truth upon the goſpel, then the man believes it, and truſts it: *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief,* 1 Tim. i. 15. What is the reaſon there is ſo great difference amongſt believers at one time and another, that the ſame promiſe of God at one time is ſtrong under them like a pillar of braſs; at another time it is weak, or they think it weak as a broken reed? The true reaſon is this:

At all times they have the word of the promiſe; but it is not at all times they ſee the glory and faithfulneſs of the ſpeaker. When the promiſe appears in the glory of the truth of the ſpeaker, it is impoſſible but it muſt be believed. When God takes his own word in his own hand, and ſtamps it down as the word of God upon the heart, then that mark is faith. Believing is another ſort of buſineſs than a great many pretended profeſſors of it know, or take it to be. The faithfulneſs of God is the cauſe of believing, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13.

4. *Laſtly*, Faith is God's appointed way for the performance of his promiſe. He will have glory by his people's believing, before he give them that ſatisfaction that they expect, and deſire in his performance. That rebuke our Lord gave to Martha, John xi. 40. is of laſting uſe in the church of Chriſt, *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God?* "Did not I tell thee before, that "if thou wouldſt but truſt in me, and wait quietly "to ſee the iſſue, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God, "for all the appearance to the contrary?"

The *ſecond* thing is, *How ought our faith to anſwer God's faithfulneſs?* Here ſome things muſt be premiſed for caution, that we do not carry the matter farther than the balance of the ſanctuary will admit.

1. You muſt not imagine, that any man's faith can anſwer God's faithfulneſs *fully*: that is impoſſible. God's faithfulneſs is an infinite perfection in itſelf; our faith is a finite grace, given to a poor ſhallow creature. Our faith can anſwer his faithfulneſs no more, than our holineſs can anſwer his holineſs, tho' we are commanded to be holy, as he is holy. We are to take the pattern of our holineſs from his holineſs; and we are to ſtudy conformity to his holineſs; but perfect conformity is impoſſible; and even ſinleſſneſs, which is impoſſible here, would not bring us to perfect conformity to God's holineſs. We muſt not think

think to anſwer God's faithfulneſs with our faith in a perfect equality.

2. Neither doth a believer anſwer God's faithfulneſs with faith as he ought. We do not pay all the faith that we owe to the truth of God. It is as impoſſible for a believer to perform the obedience of faith required in the goſpel perfectly, as it is for an unbeliever to perform obedience to the law perfectly. Indeed an unbeliever can obey nothing. Even the obedience of faith, the obeying of the goſpel by believing of it, needs goſpel-grace for the forgiveneſs of the ſin of believing, or the ſin in believing. There is never a believer that believed at firſt, but there was ſin in that believing: there are none that do rely upon the word of God ſo firmly, as that noble ſure foundation ſerveth.

3. There is no believer believes ſo firmly as he would: he does not anſwer God's faithfulneſs by his faith ſo well as he would. Whoever they be that think they believe as they deſire to believe, I dare ſay they never believed, and never will learn to believe as long as they are of that mind. That poor man ſpoke as if he underſtood faith well, Mark ix. 24. *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* Believers are called to anſwer God's faithfulneſs by their faith; but they muſt not think that they ſhall ever attain to ſo much as they would: they muſt ſtill go on growing in believing, as well as in any other grace. *The righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. We muſt go on believing daily.

4. Faith in all believers does not equally anſwer God's faithfulneſs. True faith is built upon it, but every one's faith does not alike equally anſwer it. There are ſome *ſtrong in faith*, and ſome *weak in faith*. Theſe are words in the ſcripture. Abraham is called *ſtrong in faith*, young believers are called *weak in faith*, Rom. xiv. 1. Nay, the ſame man is not alike *ſtrong in faith*, or *weak in faith*, at all times; ſometimes the *ſtrong* may grow *weak*, and the *weak* may grow

ſtrong, though they have both true faith, and that built upon God's faithfulneſs.

Theſe things I premiſe, for the preventing any miſtake in the reſolving this queſtion, what way our faith is to anſwer God's faithfulneſs? Our truſt in believing, is to anſwer God's truſtineſs in promiſing.

1*ſt*, It is to anſwer it by a ſudden taking of God's word of promiſe, and reſting on it. There is no delay for this. There is no time, no moment of time wherein a man is allowed to toſs this queſtion, Is God to be truſted, or no? This is an abomination, to conceive that the Lord will ever ſuffer a man to ſpend one moment in making this queſtion, Shall I take God's word, or no? Does he deſerve to be truſted? This is wickedneſs to think of, or to put it to the queſtion. Sudden receiving of God's word, is the glory we owe to the faithfulneſs of it. Our Lord found fault with the diſciples, that they were fools, and ſlow in heart to believe: they would take time to conſider, before they would believe. This is ſin. The apoſtle commends the Coloſſians for their faith, for their hope laid up in heaven. When began it? *Since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth*, Col. i. 6. "That very day ye heard the word with "power, the grace of God came along with it." Our Lord takes notice of this in John i. 50, 51. So runs the promiſe, Pſal. xviii. 44.

2*dly*, By taking the leaſt hint of God's word for our encouragement. This is to give glory by our faith to his faithfulneſs. The leaſt appearance of his faithful word ſhould be enough to engage our hearts. The great faith our Lord commends ſo highly, *I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael*, is exemplified by this, Matth. viii. 8. Lord, ſays the centurion, *I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof: but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed.* As if the good man would ſay, "Lord, I know that "thou doſt uſe to go to ſome mens houſes, and viſit the

"the ſick, and heal them; but I am a poor man, "unworthy of this favour." But is he unwilling to receive Chriſt's grace: No; he was far from thinking ſo; the poor man had a mind to Chriſt's grace; *Lord, ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed.* This faith is commended in the nobleman, John iv. 50. *Go thy way*, ſaith our Lord, *thy ſon liveth. And the man believed the word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went his way.* You may be ſure he went believing all the way, till he came near home, till his ſervants came and told him, *Thy ſon liveth;* then he believed over again, and believed better. There is a great failing in the faith of the people of God in this point, That they offer ſometimes, in the vanity and pride of their hearts and unbelief, to tell God which way he ſhould engage his faithfulneſs. The leaſt hint of Chriſt's faithfulneſs ſhould ſerve, if you have a mind to glorify the faithfulneſs of God.

3*dly*, Faith is to anſwer God's faithfulneſs in the full extent of it; that is, in believing in length and breadth, according to the largeneſs and wideneſs of the promiſe. Now, here is a great duty that we are very dark and ignorant about. When a believer believes rightly, he is to believe every thing God ſays. A great many things we believe, we do not know what they are; we are to believe them notwithſtanding. When thou doſt believe eternal ſalvation thro' Chriſt Jeſus, doſt thou know what it is? Doſt thou know what weight there is in the crown of glory? what entertainment is with them that behold the face of God, and of the Lamb? what is done? what is fed on? and what is enjoyed? what is ſaid within the veil? We know none of theſe things; but we muſt believe them notwithſtanding. We are to believe the full extent of the promiſe; that there ſhall be a performance, though we do not know yet what it ſhall be. *Now we are the ſons of God, but it does not yet appear what we ſhall be.* But does that ſhake their faith? No, ſays the apoſtle; *we know that when he ſhall*

ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. And with the apoſtle's leave, for as great a divine as he was, what ſeeing him as he is, and what being like him as he is in heaven, the good divine John did not know on earth, and tells us that he did not know; only in theſe general words he tells us, in Chriſt's words, *That he ſhould be with him, and behold him;* and his faith goes forth accordingly.

4*thly*, Anſwering God's faithfulneſs by our faith, is to lay all our weight upon the promiſe of God, and upon it only; every thing that concerns us for our ſouls and eternal ſalvation, for our outward concerns, for Zion, for the church and people of God; it is to glorify divine faithfulneſs, to lay all theſe burthens upon the back of the promiſes, not doubting but it ſhall bear them; laying it upon the promiſe alone. It is a great matter for a believer to think God's faithfulneſs ſecurity alone, that there needs nothing to prop it and hold it up. We many times ſinfully crave props of ſenſe to ſupport our faith; but the matter indeed is to ſupport the promiſe; therefore we would fain that God ſhould give ſomething to ſupport us; all this like Naaman, 2 Kings v. is unbelief. We muſt lay all our weights and burthens upon the faithfulneſs of God; ſo ſays dying David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God; yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.* As if David, in his laſt words, had left this his legacy to all believers in after ages, that now when a dying man, "I have," ſays he, "ſeen a "great deal of ſin and wickedneſs in my family, in "my heart and life, and in the land of Iſrael; in the "caſes of Uriah, Abſalom, Amnon, Tamar, Adoni-"jah; but I now die ſatisfied with this only, *He hath* "*made with me an everlaſting covenant*, &c. Here is "*all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.*"

5*thly*,

5*thly*, The answering God's faithfulness by our faith, is in the avowing our faith to God and men. God avows his promise publicly, Isa. xlv. 19. It is not enough that we believe, but we must not be ashamed to own it. How frequently do we find the saints owning it to God? Psal. lvii. 1, 2, 3. *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up; Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.* Oh what a blessed song is this! He prays for mercy, because he trusts in it: and he adds this, *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.* If I may so speak, these two messengers, mercy and truth, are enough to pluck a man out of the jaws of death and hell itself; if God send them, they come; and if they come, they save one, that is certain. The psalmist complains most grievously of their reflecting upon his God; it was as a sword in his bones, while they reproached him for trusting in his God. Psalm xi. he is so confident he will reproach them for it, ver. 1. *In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?* "Are ye not "ashamed," would David say, "to look upon me as "a forlorn person, and tell me to flee to the moun- "tains for help, when I have a refuge in my God?"

Lastly, God's faithfulness should be answered by our faith, in our constant keeping upon this foundation. Faith and practice is required in order to the inheriting of the promise. Performance comes not immediately as the promise is made, nor as soon as it is believed, Acts vii. 17. Psalm xxxi. 15. Believing must be drawn forth God's full time, till performance ripen the ground. Why we should believe God's faithfulness is, because God's faithfulness is a constant thing itself. If the Lord's faithfulness did change, a believer's faith might change lawfully; if there were any shaking in the word of God, it were no sin for a be-

a believer to doubt in that word. The aggravation of unbelief is, becauſe we change in our faith, when God is unchangeable in his faithfulneſs.

APPLICATION.

If believers faith ſhould anſwer God's faithfulneſs,

1. Then, what can the unbeliever do that has no faith? God's faithfulneſs is before him; the faithfulneſs of God is ſeen in his threatenings and promiſes: the faithfulneſs of God is ſeen in the law, and in the goſpel; the unbeliever hath faith for neither. When God threatens the unbeliever with everlaſting deſtruction for his ſin in the law, every ſecure ſinner ſays, God is a liar. Fearleſſneſs of wrath, when a man is under the laſh of God's threatening is a certain proof that he believes not what he ſpeaks. There is no word of threatening ſhall come ſhort of its fulfilment, no more than a word of promiſe. The unbeliever hath no entertainment to give to the promiſe of the goſpel, becauſe he hath not faith; what then muſt the iſſue of it be? A man that hath no faith, is under theſe two things; one at preſent, and the other a-coming, if God prevent it not. Firſt, Every man that is an unbeliever muſt blaſpheme God now, whatever he does when he goes to hell. There is no greater blaſphemy againſt God, than to ſay he lies. A poor lying man, through the cuſtom and faſhion of this world, looks upon it as one of the greateſt provocations that can be given in words, to ſay in his face he lies. Every poor ſinner that hears the law and the goſpel, and neither trembles at threatenings, nor rejoices at promiſes, ſays every day to God he lies. *He that receives not his teſtimony has made God a liar*, 1 John v. 10. *And he that receives his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal, that God is true*, John iii. 33. People that have not faith, have great need to cry for faith, to beg that God would give it. I have nothing to entertain

tertain God's faithfulneſs with, I have no hand to take a word from God, if I have not faith.

2. How juſtly chargeable are believers themſelves, if their faith ſhould not anſwer God's faithfulneſs? How guilty are moſt believers in this matter? An unbelieving believer is a monſter, nor for the rarity of it, but for the uglineſs of it; for there is nothing more common amongſt believers, than to be acting unbelief. There are few believers, but do act more unbelief than faith; they unbelieve, if I may ſo ſpeak, ten times for their unbelieving once. Now, the great aggravation of this their ſin is, that not only God's faithfulneſs is engaged for their faith to act on, but God hath wrought faith in them: therefore the guilt of believers is very great upon this account. Shall a man that is in this caſe be ſtill acting unbelief? Too frequently they do ſo, but I will name a few things, and conclude at this time.

1*ſt*, How many believers act their unbelief, and are convicted from this point, in their fearing to believe, when they are called to lay hold on the hope ſet before them, and to lay the ſtreſs of their eternal ſalvation upon the faithful promiſe of God? They are are afraid they ſhall ſin to believe. I pray now is this a mannerly queſtion, Shall I ſin in truſting God? Is not this a fearful thing? Is there any danger of ſinning in my taking God's word? I am ſure, the greateſt ſin is in refuſing it, and there can be none in taking of it. It is nothing but the power and ſtrength of unbelief that makes ſo much fear in believers. In putting forth the hand of faith, they ſeem to put forth their hand to God, as he is a conſuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. and not as he is in his Son reconciling us to himſelf.

2*dly*, Not only are they very fearful to believe, but very weak in believing. A great many believers (if I may uſe ſuch a homely ſimilitude) walk upon the promiſe at God's call in the way to heaven, even as a child upon weak ice, which they are afraid will crack

under them, and leave them in the depth. What can there be but unbelief in the weak truſt we have in the promiſe of God? Art thou ſure, that thou haſt truſted thy ſoul upon the word of God? Do not reply, there is no more betwixt thee and eternal ruin, but a bare word of God; for can that word fail? is it poſſible, that it can miſcarry? Why then ſhould we not believe more firmly? There is a ſilly practice amongſt us, I ſhall not ſpeak my mind about it, I only ſpeak of it now with reſpect to my preſent purpoſe; A great many believers do even venture in their believing upon the word of God, as too many idle people do upon their lotteries, they will try; but they do not know whether they ſhall get a blank or a benefit. Is this believing and giving glory to the faithfulneſs of God?

3*dly*, There is doubting after believing. When a poor believer hath once caſt his burden upon the word of God, a cloud comes on, and he begins to queſtion, whether he did well in truſting God or no; this is the Engliſh of it, Did I well to truſt God? *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*, Luke xxiv. 21. but was it well done, thus to repent of their truſt?

4*thly*, Believers are many times in danger, by uſing ſinful ſhifts to obtain the thing promiſed, as in Gen. xvi. 2. David would not do ſo, as you may ſee, 2 Sam. i.

Laſtly, Believers are guilty of great unbelief, in pleading the cauſe of their unbelief; they not only doubt, but they will argue for their doubting. Now, all objections of unbelief are arguments againſt faith; they are all great reflections on God's faithfulneſs, and are only to be anſwered by God's faithfulneſs: and we muſt take this as an univerſal anſwer to them all, All the pleas that the carnal unbelieving heart of a Chriſtian can frame for the fencing himſelf in unbelief, are all to be broken upon the rock of God's unchangeable

changeable faithfulneſs. I will name ſome of their objections.

1. I do not know, if the promiſe be to me; If I were ſure that the promiſe were to me, I would believe it better than I do. I anſwer, Is the law to thee? is the command to thee? Does the law of God threaten thee in the firſt Adam? and is not the goſpel to thee alſo in the ſecond Adam? Is not the promiſe thine, if it be believed? What is the meaning of the preaching of the goſpel? but only this, Preach the goſpel to every creature, and tell them, He that believes, ſhall be ſaved. Whoever they be that will venture their ſalvation upon the man ſlain at Jeruſalem, and expect God's favour, and eternal life for his ſake tendered to them, believe it that will, if they take it, it is theirs.

2. A ſecond objection is, I am a vile, filthy, guilty creature, how dare I believe? Satan and unbelief will multiply things here, and make a hideous appearance to a poor creature; as indeed, if the devil get leave to draw a perſon's own picture, and to ſet it before his eyes, or to write the hiſtory of his life, this will be a very dreadful thing; ſome have ſeen it, and felt the terror of it. But what is this to the faithfulneſs of God? Is God unfaithful in his promiſe, becauſe I am a great ſinner? No ſuch thing; nay, *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* Is this an argument, Becauſe I am very ſick, therefore Jeſus Chriſt the Phyſician will take no care of me; I dare not employ him, becauſe I am very ſick; Aſſure yourſelves of this, Where-ever ſin is a man's diſeaſe, there Jeſus Chriſt has been already the Phyſician, and will certainly cure it. I do not ſay, where ſin is a man's delight, where ſin is a man's truce, but where-ever ſin is a poor creature's ſickneſs, and when they are groaning towards Chriſt, the Phyſician, our Lord Jeſus, hath begun to cure them, and will perfect it infallibly.

3. Another objection that unbelieving believers make, is, I am a backſliding creature, I have been mighty unfaithful to God. What then? It may be God will deal with you, as he did with the backſliders of old. See how he calls them, *Return, ye backſliding children, I will heal your backſlidings; Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*, Jer. iii. 22. The name the Lord gives them is, *backſliding children;* the promiſe he makes them is, he *will heal their backſlidings.* Both theſe are entertained by an aſſent of faith, *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God*, that only canſt heal us. Sometimes they will plead, God is very angry, and hides himſelf. What then? He is not unfaithful for all that, the promiſe ſtands ſure. *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thyſelf, O God of Iſrael the Saviour*, Iſaiah xlv. 15. ſee alſo Pſalm cxix. 75. I can aſſure you, Chriſtians, that that faith is very weak, and that believer will lead but a poor ſorry life, that hath not learned to believe in the dark, as well as in the light of his countenance. We muſt not believe by day-light only, we muſt learn to believe in the dark. The greateſt part of the way to heaven lies in the dark; if we have not this light of faith, we are but in a bad caſe. Some may ſay, they ſee no appearance of performance; they have tried the promiſe of God, and it is as unlikely as it was at firſt; the complete ſalvation of their ſoul is far off; the growth of their corruptions appears daily; their conſciences ſometimes making as dreadful an alarm as in the days of their former darkneſs. This is a very common and ordinary exerciſe, and the cure of it is very eaſy; the remedy is near at hand. We are not to judge of the certainty of the fulfilment of the word of promiſe, by the appearances that are in providences towards us, but we are to build all upon the faithfulneſs of the ſpeaker. Though *clouds and darkneſs be round about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, Pſal. xcvii. 2. The word ſtands firmly, whatever

ever darkneſs there be in his works; wait a while, and but a little while, (Heb. x. 37.), give him time, and give him truſt, and none that believe in him ſhall ever be aſhamed.

SERMON VII.

HEBREWS x. 23.

----He is faithful that promiſed.

THE apoſtle tells us in Rom. x. 17. that *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Faith both *comes* by hearing, and *grows* by hearing. There is no part of divine truth that is more profitable for the growing in faith, than the doctrine of faith; it is therefore a great pity, and a great miſcarriage, that when people hear much of faith, they do not practiſe much. Every thing that is ſpoken of faith, is ſpoken of it, that ye ſhould be always doing; that as the ear takes in the report of the doctrine of faith, the heart may be exerciſed in the acting of it. With reſpect unto this, I have ſeveral times ſpoke already, upon this latter part of this verſe, which is the apoſtle's argument, by which he enforceth the exhortation he gave in the preceeding part; and from this argument I have obſerved three things.

1. That the Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God. He is called here by the apoſtle, *He that promiſes;* and the apoſtle knew well God's names, and which it is that is fitteſt to be uſed on every occaſion.

2. That this promiſing God is faithful in all his promiſes, which he hath promiſed from the beginning

of

of the world to this day. There have been ſome in all ages, and a great many in ſome ages, that have truſted God upon his promiſes; but there hath not been one that could ever juſtly charge God with failing.

3. The *third* thing that I ſpoke to was, That the Chriſtian's faith ſhould anſwer God's faithfulneſs; that as our faith is fixed on God's promiſes, faith ſhould ſome way be as firm as the promiſes. A Chriſtian is called faithful, becauſe he is a *believer;* God is called faithful, becauſe he is a *fulfiller;* he keeps his word by *doing* it, believers are faithful in *truſting* it. Upon this note I ſhewed, 1. Why the Chriſtian's faith ſhould anſwer God's faithfulneſs. 2. How it may and ought ſo to do. Some ways it cannot, ſome ways it muſt.

I concluded with a double reflection; one upon the ſinful miſerable ſtate of unbelievers. They have nothing to anſwer God's faithfulneſs; they muſt periſh, becauſe they have not faith; they diſhonour God highly, becauſe of their unbelief. The true ſtate of the matter is this: Our firſt father and mother, Adam and Eve, if I may ſo ſpeak, by their ſin leapt overboard, they caſt themſelves under the wrath and curſe of God. In this ſtate all we their poſterity are born; the Lord, in great mercy through Chriſt Jeſus, caſts forth the rope of his promiſe; now, what is an unbeliever, but like a poor drowning man? there is a rope caſt out that may ſave him, the poor man has no hands to catch at it, therefore muſt periſh; and to periſh in the view of a promiſe, is a ſad caſe; but to the believer, the Lord will ſtretch out his hand to help him.

2. I made a little reflection upon the unbelief of believers. Believers themſelves are wofully guilty ſometimes in this matter, and their faith is far from anſwering the faithfulneſs of God. Compare his faithfulneſs with their faith, and you would think they do not relate to one another at all. Strong ground,

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ſtrong foundation, but ſorry building upon it! I named four of their common failings, which I ſhall have occaſion to inſiſt more upon on the other head. Sometimes they fear to believe, as if there were any ſin in truſting God; when diſtruſt is the greateſt ſin; they believe fearfully and weakly, as if the ground would not bear them: they believe and doubt, and recall their believing: they plead ſometimes the cauſe of their unbelief in many of their ungodly objections againſt faith.

That which I would now do in the proſecuting this point, and with reſpect to all the three, ſhall be to give you, Firſt, Some doctrinal inferences from this point; then, if the Lord will, we may come to make ſome practical exhortations unto duty therefrom.

As to theſe inferences, I ſhall ſpeak to a few of them at this time.

1. Hence we ſee, what the ſtrict and true nature of faith is. The doctrine is, *That believers faith ſhould anſwer God's faithfulneſs.* We hence infer the ſtrict and true nature of ſaving faith; which is certainly this: It is a truſting of God's word for his own faithfulneſs in ſpeaking it, a truſting God's promiſe for the faithfulneſs of the ſpeaker; that is ſtrictly the nature of faith. It is a pity, but a pity that you will have occaſion to exerciſe as long as you live in the world, that faith is ſo mightily miſtaken by ſo many people. People can talk of faith, can diſpute of faith, and in the mean time they are in a cloud, in a maze about the thing itſelf, and know not what believing is.

1*ſt*, Believing is not doing, but truſting. It is oppoſed to doing and working, Rom. iv. 5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*, John vi. 26,----29. *The juſt lives by faith;* but the law is not of faith: the law requires doing, Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12. Faith is God's commandment, that is certain.

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The firſt precept in the decalogue is for faith, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me;* the poſitive part of it is, Thou ſhalt take me by faith to be the Lord thy God. Faith is never put forth as obedience; the ſtrict nature of faith is truſting the ſpeaker. The apoſtle ſpeaks in Heb. vi. 18. of faith under a bleſſed ſimilitude, as *flying for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us.* Now pray conſider what the ſtate of the man that fled for refuge was. There was no other appointment of God left for him, but only the next city of refuge. The man that had ſhed innocent blood caſually, for that was the caſe under the law, there was nothing elſe required in order to his ſafety, but running with ſpeed to the next city of refuge. The man muſt not go to the temple, or altar, and pray, or offer ſacrifice there for his life, he muſt not go home to his houſe, and mind his buſineſs and affairs; there was only one thing required of him, if he would be ſafe from the avenger of blood; to the city of refuge he muſt fly. A man muſt not go to ſave his life by doing ſome great act of valour for his country, againſt the enemies of it. Flying was the only ſhift, if I may ſo ſpeak, that God fixed, and he muſt make uſe of. Believing is commanded, but it is always acted in truſt.

2*dly*, Faith is not a notional aſſent to a divine truth, but it is an aſſent with the heart to the good will of God. Pray take heed to this; true faith gives an aſſent unto all that God ſays, unto all that God reveals; but if you come to the ſtrict nature of ſaving faith, it is only a truſting of a promiſing God, it is only a hearty affiance in God, in, and under, and by virtue of his promiſes. To believe, is not only to ſay, God has ſaid this, and therefore it is true; but it is to believe that what God ſays, he ſays to me. What good-will hath God declared in the word concerning me? A believing of that is this faith that we are ſpeaking of. Thus I ſay, you are to take up the ſtrict

nature

nature of faith; the proper nature of it is truſting God's promiſes, for God's faithfulneſs that ſpeaks it. And thus we have theſe advantages by this ſtrict notion of faith, and theſe confirmations of its being right.

(1.) Thus it is diſtinguiſhed from all falſe faith. There is a great deal of faith in this world that is little worth, there is a great deal more in the next world that is leſs worth. In this world a great many of the ungodly have a kind of faith, ſuch as it is; they know divine truth, they give an aſſent to it; this aſſent may be ſo ſtrong ſometimes, that it may work ſome alteration in their converſations, they may eſcape the corruptions of the world thro' the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, when, in the mean time, they have no faith for all that; they are dogs and ſwine ſtill, as the apoſtle calls them, 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 22. The great difference that is betwixt all the unſound faith of hypocrites, and the true faith of a believer, is to be determined from the proper nature of believing. There is no unbeliever that ever takes God's word for his ſecurity, barely as it is God's word; there is never an unbeliever that truſts God's promiſe, becauſe God makes it; the promiſe is never ſeen by ſuch a one as it is in the hand of the faithful promiſer; and therefore the man never believes with the heart, and therefore never believes truly. Again, there is a great deal of faith in the other world. The devil hath faith, all the damned in hell have faith, but a woful faith it is; God ſave us from ever knowing what it means. The devil knows the mind of God in the word better than any miniſter this day in the world; he knows God and he knows Chriſt wofully: *What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high God?* Mark v. 7. The devil knows the goſpel: Acts xvi. 17. *Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation.* What better can be ſaid of the goſpel than this, to call it *the way of ſalvation;*

and to call the ſervants that preach it, *the ſervants of the moſt high God*, that have it for their employment, *to ſhew men the way of ſalvation?* All the damned in hell are great believers, but woful ones. They know certainly that there is a God, for they feel his diſpleaſure; they know certainly he is a juſt God, for they lie under the laſhes of his juſtice for ever; they believe firmly the day of judgment, for they tremble in the fears and approaches of it: but there is no found faith there; why? Becauſe there is no promiſe there. If there was a promiſe let down to them that are in hell, faith might be there; if the ſame God would give the promiſe and work faith, it might be acted there; but there is no promiſe there, and therefore there is no faith there, there is no deliverance from that priſon, Luke xii. 59.

(2.) This is a fit deſcription of the ſtrict nature of faith, becauſe it anſwers the firſt expreſſion of faith, that is in all the word of God. I do not ſay, that Abraham was the firſt believer; but this you may find, that he is the firſt man that is ſpoken of as a believer. It is true, in the next chapter of this epiſtle, there are ſome believers named before him; Abel was a believer, Enoch and Noah were believers; but the firſt faith ſpoken of in the word expreſly is Abraham's; and you know how much uſe is made of Abraham's faith, and practice, and example in the new teſtament, Gen. xv. 4, 5, 6. The word of the Lord came to Abraham, and ſaid to him, *Look now toward heaven, and tell the ſtars, if thou be able to number them. And he ſaid unto him, So ſhall thy ſeed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs.* What was this believing in the Lord, but the believing with the heart, the truth of what God ſpoke? And ye know, by Paul's help, what a great deal of goſpel there was in this word, *So ſhall thy ſeed be.*

(3.) It anſwers the frequent name that is given to the revelation of God's will, that is, *the way of our ſalva-*

salvation. It is called the gospel, that is *good tidings;* and what are good tidings, unless they be believed? It is called a *promise;* and what signifies a promise unless trusted? It is called a *covenant;* and what signifies a covenant, unless subscribed unto, unless a man enter into it? The entering into it is by believing him that promises.

(4.) This is a right notion of faith, because it answers all faith, all sorts of faith whatsoever. It answers the faith of the strongest, and the faith of the weakest; it answers Abraham's faith, and it answers them of little faith. What is the reason of this distinction, that there are some strong in the faith, but because they put a strong trust in God's strong faithfulness? What is the reason some are called weak in the faith, but because they give a weak, wavering, staggering trust to the faithfulness of God? It answers all sorts of faith; faith for justification; faith for sanctification; faith for our comfortable support in our pilgrimage; faith for our safe landing at heaven. All these consist in our trusting God's promise, for his sake who gave the promise: as I shall shew more at large, when I come to lay before you your duty of believing. Only this shall serve for the first inference, that we may hence see, what the strict nature of believing is; it is trusting God upon his promise, it is taking God upon his word.

2. We see hence what the reasonableness of believing is; of strong believing; why? Because it is trusting God's faithfulness. What can be more reasonable than this? I know that sense and carnal reason are the greatest enemies of true believing; but there is nothing unreasonable in believing; nay, pure spiritual reason is highly for it. Can there be any thing more reasonable than this, to trust one that cannot lie? to take an immutable foundation to build our confidence upon? So the apostle Paul expresses it, when pleading his cause before Agrippa, and Festus, and Bernice, (a great many great folks were there): and

Acts xxvi. 8. He has this expreſſion to king Agrippa, *Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?* The apoſtle's ſcope there, is not to diſcourſe that head of divinity about the reſurrection of the dead, that was not his principal deſign; but here lay the grand matter, that Paul laboured to pinch their conſciences by, that our Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, that died for our ſins, was riſen again for our juſtification; the unbelieving world that ſaw him before he died, and ſaw him die, did not ſee him after he was riſen again; now, ſays Paul, *why ſhould it ſeem a thing incredible*, &c.? The words before, and thoſe following, ſhew they had a promiſe for it, and that all the people of Iſrael had hope in the promiſe that God had made; thereupon, in ver. 27. he drives the matter moſt cloſely upon the conſcience of that great man, *King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt;* as if Paul would ſay, "Thou aſſenteſt to this, that the pro-"phets ſpake the mind of God by inſpiration: doſt "thou believe that I preach nothing elſe but what "the prophets foretold, and what I know is ful-"filled; that God hath raiſed his Son Chriſt Jeſus?" *Almoſt*, ſaith Agrippa, *thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.* The higheſt reaſon for the believing any thing is, *Thus ſaith the Lord;* the moſt certain reaſon that a future thing ſhall be, is, that the Lord hath ſaid it ſhall be. Therefore now we ſhould tread down carnal reaſon, and yield to this main grand reaſon, Thus ſaith the Lord; God hath ſpoken, and it muſt be true, becauſe he ſaith it; and I will truſt it, becauſe it is true. Conſider an inſtance of Abraham's faith with reſpect of iſſue from Sarah, Rom. iv. 18, 19. *Who againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations.----He conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief;*

lief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God. Pray obſerve, Abraham in this caſe muſt believe againſt ſenſe, againſt reaſon, and againſt all experience; though it is likely that, before the flood, women were fruitful, when they were a great deal older than Sarah was; but a little while after the flood, men and womens lives and vigour were contracted to much the ſame bounds as at this day. Abraham conſidered not that Sarah was ninety years old: "Nay," would the man ſay, "if ſhe were nineſcore, or nine "hundred years old, God hath ſaid it, and I believe "it." Now, the grand matter was not barely and ſimply, that Abraham ſhould be a father of a ſon, that he ſhould be a father of many nations; but in this great promiſe of iſſue from God Chriſt was comprehended, who was to be the eternal ſalvation of the whole church of God. He was to ſpring from Sarah's womb, and Abraham had the promiſe of it, and againſt all ſenſe, reaſon, and experience, he will believe it. Now obſerve what uſe the apoſtle makes of it: *It was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification,* ver. 23, 24, 25. Pray obſerve, what I drive at is this, That the apoſtle brings in every believer on Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, in the ſame liſt of enjoying the bleſſing with great Abraham, that believed ſo ſtrange a thing about Sarah. And the truth is, that the ſalvation of a ſinner, dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, by Chriſt Jeſus, is a greater wonder and miracle, than Sarah's dead womb bringing forth a living child: that, in a manner, was a work of wonder, wrought by the God of nature according to his word; and this is a work of wonderful grace againſt the courſe of ſinful nature, for the overthrowing of it.

3. Hence we ſee why faith is ſaid to *give glory to God:* the reaſon is, becauſe faith anſwers God's faith-

faithfulneſs. Great faith is ſaid to give glory to God; one of the ſpecial commendations of Abraham's faith is, *He was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. God magnifies his name of faithfulneſs above all his names; the believer magnifies his faithfulneſs by his believing, therefore he gives glory to God. There are three honourable ſervices that ſome men get put into their hands, and which are denied to angels. There is preaching of Chriſt, ſuffering for Chriſt, and believing in him: theſe are three honourable pieces of ſervice, that only poor mortal men are intruſted with. The apoſtle reckons he had got a great grace, when he had got that of preaching Chriſt and that too the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. When an angel was ſent to Cornelius, he was not ſent to preach the goſpel to him, but to tell him where a goſpel-preacher was, Acts x. Suffering for Chriſt is a great honour; angels are not capable of it, it does not ſtand with their bleſſed ſtate. The apoſtle ſeems to call this a higher matter, than the honour of believing, Phil. i. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.* Let us paſs theſe, and conſider, wherein there is an honouring of God by believing; for it is a point very rarely believed. Who is there of believers that think, that by bare believing they give God more glory, than any other way they can do?

1ſt, Faith gives glory to God, becauſe it brings nothing to him, but poverty, want, and emptineſs. All graces bring ſomething to God, but faith brings nothing. Love brings a flaming, burning heart to God; repentance brings a bleeding, broken heart to God; obedience brings a working hand to God; patience brings, as it were, a broad back to God, let him lay on what he will; poor faith brings juſt nothing, but the poor man's bare hand and empty diſh. The poorer man comes to God, the more glory to God. It is remarkable, that in thoſe caſes wherein we

we bring something to God, we are very apt to carry away something of the glory that belongs to him: faith brings nothing at all to God; it brings no more than broken bones, and sores to the great Physician. As a condemned prisoner, it brings his chains and fetters to the great Redeemer, but nothing to commend him to God, nor carries away any thing from God.

2*dly*, Faith glorifies God; for it seeks all in him, and from him; as it brings nothing to him, so it expects every thing from him, whatever its wants be. The language of faith is, "All my wants be upon "thee, O Lord;" there is no other way of bearing them; it expects all from him, and from the single warrant of his word.

3*dly*, Faith always glorifies God, for it ventures its all upon his word. The believer is still in this frame, in the exercise of faith: "Now here I have "God's faithful promise; and if it should fail me, I "should certainly sink for ever. My soul, body, re- "putation, privileges of the gospel, all my concerns "whatsoever, are all laid upon the faithfulness of "God; they are all put in that bottom of the ship: "if I miscarry, I am gone for ever." Who is there of believers that believes this, that a bare adventuring of thy eternal salvation upon the Son of God, by virtue of the promise of God, brings more glory to God, than all things else can do?

Lastly, Faith glorifies God, because all other acts of glorifying God are only so as faith is in them, and as they spring from faith. When the apostle is commending the great exploits of believers, Heb. xi. for faith, they all *all obtained a good report through faith.* If their works had been done without faith, there is never a good word to be said of them, whatever they did. All our duties, obedience, sufferings, the great things that are done for God, only tend to the glory of God, as they are spirited and enlivened by faith. Take away faith from your prayers, and God gets no

glory,

glory, and you no comfort, by your praying, James i. 5, 6, 7. Let faith be ſeparated from the word, and God gets no glory by your hearing. Whatever you do, there is no glorifying God, unleſs in the doing of the thing you do believe: *Whatſoever is not of faith is ſin*, Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6.

4. Hence we ſee how faith is ſaid to ſave the ſoul, becauſe it anſwers God's faithfulneſs. Such is approaching to the ſaving God, and its neareſt abode with him. It is running to, and abiding with him. It is going in the neareſt way to heaven: Heb. x. 39. *We are not of them*, ſays the apoſtle, *who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe, to the ſaving of the ſoul.* The poor jailor aſks a queſtion, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved*, ſays Paul. Pray now, what is the meaning of this? "There is a man Jeſus Chriſt, "whoſe ſervant I am;" would Paul ſay, "and thou "haſt perſecuted me for his ſake, and for preaching "of him; now believe on him, venture thy ſoul on "him, take his word for thy ſalvation, his righteouſ-"neſs for thy cloathing, his Spirit for thy ſanctifica-"tion, and thou ſhalt certainly be ſaved as well as I, "or any others." I need not inſiſt upon the frequent connections that are in the goſpel, betwixt believing and ſalvation; this only is that which I drive at, to ſhew you, how faith comes to be ſaving to the ſoul; it is an echoing to God's faithfulneſs. Take the matter in theſe four plain principles, to begin at the top. 1*ſt*, My eternal ſalvation ſtands in the enjoyment of God. 2*dly*, This God comes down to me in Chriſt Jeſus, for otherwiſe he is not to be known, not to be enjoyed. 3*dly*, This Chriſt Jeſus comes to me in the promiſe of the goſpel, otherwiſe he is not to be known, he is not to be received. 4*thly*, This promiſe, in the day of God's power, is joined with my faith, and my faith with it. It came to me, and I received it. See for this, Gal. iii. 23, 25. Hence the believer riſes up again and ſays, God has wrought faith in me: Therefore

Therefore (1.) The promise is mine. (2.) Christ inseparable from the promise is mine, and then God inseparable from Christ is mine, and I must be saved for ever. So that where-ever the believer begins, at the top, at God, or at the bottom, at the dependance of his soul on God, the reason backward or forward holds perpetually: now, there is no parting of any of these; God never revealed himself a faithful God to any, but in Christ; Christ never revealed himself as a Saviour to any, but in the promise; the promise does no good to any, but a believer. It is true, God in his great wisdom makes use of the promise, as the means of faith, as well as the ground of faith. The reason why faith saves the soul, is not because of any mighty thing in faith, for faith is a poor weak thing; but it is fixed to the faithfulness of God, and the faithfulness of God through Christ is in it, and God is in it. You may take faithfulness from God the Father, as soon as take salvation from a believer in Christ Jesus. Hence comes it, I say, that faith is saving. The rope of salvation is in the promise; the poor believer hath but a trembling hand in catching hold of it; but, if I may so speak, the higher end of the hope is in heaven, at the right hand of God, and it catches hold of the believer; unless it break, saved he must be; break it cannot, and therefore saved he must be. See Phil. iii. 12.

5. I might add, Hence we may see something of the *easiness of believing.* I do not say, it is an easy thing for a man to believe; this is a deceiving flattery of wicked, ungodly men. I intend, if the Lord will, to prove the contrary, that there is great *difficulty* in the working of faith. All my meaning is, that it is an easy thing to act faith, where God hath wrought it already. In this case, it is but the soul's echo to the faithfulness of God, it is only the soul's saying amen when God promises. I hear the word of him that cannot lie, amen, so be it; that if I may compare this ordinary instance with an extraordinary

one, Luke i. 38. The angel of the Lord that brought the virgin Mary the tidings of the conceptions of our bleſſed Saviour, he ſent her the news; ſhe ſtaggers at it at firſt, through unbelief, at laſt, by the power of God, faith is begotten in her: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word;* that, if I may ſo ſpeak, was the very conſent of faith, that the miraculous conception of the Son of God began with. So may it be with us, if the Lord will put that life, and power, and ſtamp on the promiſe of the goſpel, that here is life, and ſalvation, and righteouſneſs, and all good, both of grace and glory, tendered to faith through Chriſt Jeſus. Truſt him, truſt God's word, and it ſhall be done. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.* Though there be nothing more incredible, though there is nothing that is more impoſſible, than that ſuch a vile creature as I am ſhould be ſaved; yet God hath ſaid it, God hath bid me believe it, and believe it I muſt, or call the ſpeaker a liar. Believing is hard only to the unbeliever: but let the Spirit of faith (as the apoſtle calls it) be ſtirring, and a believer cannot forbear to believe. Let the word of God be heard as the word of God, and this is by the preaching it as his word, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. and the aſſent of true faith will be given to it, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. And thus will its fruits be both unknown to the unbeliever, and to the non-feeling believer.

Laſtly, Hence we ſee why ſo much is ſpoken of faith in our Saviour, John iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promised.

THE faithfulness of God is one of his great and glorious names. Whenever he makes it appear before the eyes of a poor sinner, when he proclaims this name, then they believe, but never till then. It is a sad thing to consider, that when there is so much of faith spoken of in the word, there should be so little of it in the exercise of Christians. The new testament name that is given to the godly, is that of believers. A man is not called a believer, because he hath faith, or because he once acted faith; as long as he lives, he should be still believing.

1. We find the gospel is called *the word of faith.* The apostle speaks of it expressly in distinction from the law, Rom. x. 8. *The word of faith which we preach,* Gal. iii. 2. it is called *the hearing of faith;* that is, the doctrine of faith. The gospel is called the word of faith, as it is the only ground of faith. All the hope that is raised in the heart of man, as to good in time, or as to eternity, is all founded on the bare word of God. We can believe nothing but his word; and we believe it, because it is his word. Again, it is called the word of faith, because it is the means of faith, and begets faith. What think you is faith? but only the impression, the stamp that the word of the gospel, when brought home with power, leaves upon the soul. It is the heart's echo to the voice of salvation by Christ in the gospel; and when the Lord proclaims it, as he can, and always does to the chosen, this echo will still follow. Again, it is the word

of faith, becauſe it is the food of faith, that which we are to deſire, *that we may grow thereby*, 1 Peter ii. 2. The whole goſpel is the word of faith; people get no good by the goſpel unleſs they get faith; they cannot profit by the goſpel but by faith, and by the increaſe of that faith.

2. We find Chriſt gets a name from faith, Heb. xii. 2. *He is the author and finiſher of our faith* When we think of the many names and offices of our Lord, ſome of which have a great deal of viſible glory in them, how ſhall we conceive of this, that our Lord Jeſus ſhould be denominated the author and finiſher of our faith! that Chriſt ſhould get a name, as it were, in the word, from the begetting and cheriſhing, and preſerving, and perfecting of faith in a poor creature!

3. We find the Holy Ghoſt called the *Spirit of faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. *We have the ſame Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken; we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.* We find farther in the word a *work of faith* ſpoken of, a work of God's working, 2 Theſſ. i. 11. *The work of faith with power.* We find alſo *a good fight of faith* ſpoken of.

Now, from all theſe things you may plainly ſee, that people do not know what pertains to the goſpel; they know not Jeſus Chriſt, they know not the promiſe; they know not the Holy Spirit; they know nothing of a work of God upon their hearts, unleſs they know ſomething of a work of faith. Alas! many poor creatures are wofully deceived about their ſouls. Some have had experience of this, and they think it a great experience, that whereas they were ungodly, and carnal, and ſecure, and walked looſely; ſtrong convictions of ſin came upon them, and ſome reformation from ſin followed after; they immediately think they are good Chriſtians, (many ſuch good Chriſtians are in hell), but in the mean time have no

ſenſe

ſenſe of this Spirit of faith. What have you found of the Spirit of God as a Spirit of faith, carrying on a work of faith in your ſouls, and drawing forth your hearts that are naturally unbelieving, unto a truſting in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?

We find farther, *a door of faith* ſpoken of, Acts xiv. 27.-----*And how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.* See Heb. iv. 1, 2, 3, 11. A poor unbeliever is a priſoner under the law, a priſoner under the chain of God's curſe, and he can do nothing but ſtay there; for remove he cannot, until the devil come to drag him out to hell. In this miſerable ſtate, the Lord opens a door of faith, that the poor priſoner may get out, and get into the open air, and come to partake of the glorious liberty of the ſons of God: Gal. iii. 23. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, and ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed;* that is, we were priſoners till that faith came, then we had our liberty.

We find likewiſe the *footſteps of faith* ſpoken of. There are no true Chriſtians, but muſt know ſomething of this:-----*And the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumciſed,* Rom. iv. 12. He had the bleſſing of the covenant before he had the ſeal of it. Now, Abraham's footſteps were ſtrong ones, ſteady ones, and, if I may ſo ſpeak, they were wide ſteps that he took in the way of faith. It is a hard matter for you and me to follow him; ay, but though we cannot walk ſo faſt, nor ſo ſtrongly as he did, yet we muſt walk in the footſteps of the ſame faith. When our faith and his are compared, our ſteps and his compared, it is a ſhame to think what a great difference there is betwixt them; but this way we muſt walk in; a child may follow the footſteps of a ſtrong man.

Laſtly, There is an *end of faith* ſpoken of: *Receiving the end of your faith, even the ſalvation of your ſouls,*

1 Peter

1 Peter i. 9. The end of faith is that which faith aims at, that which faith attains, and that with which faith hath no more to do, when it hath got it; for there is no proper believing in heaven; and there is no true believer, but he believes till then. There is alſo, (1.) The myſtery of faith, 1 Tim. iii. 9. (2.) The law of faith, Rom. iii. 27. (3.) The work of faith, 1 Tim. i. 11. (4.) Houſehold of faith, Gal. vi. 10. (5.) Fight of faith, 1 Tim vi. 12.

So much now is ſaid concerning faith in the word, and of its great influence on all things that pertain to this life, and that to come, that ſure no true Chriſtian can poſſibly be unconcerned about this affair.

In ſpeaking to this word, as I have done ſeveral times, *Faithful is he that promiſes*, I have ſpoken, 1. To the promiſing God, as the name of our God. 2. Unto the faithfulneſs of this promiſing God. 3. That the faith of believers ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, that as all our faith is built upon his promiſes, ſo our faith ſhould be built firm, becauſe the promiſe is firm. I did propoſe, in the application of theſe truths, ſome doctrinal inferences to be drawn therefrom, then an exhortation unto believing inferred from all.

Of the doctrinal inferences I named four laſt day, and entered a little upon the fifth, which I would now ſpeak farther to.

1. Hence we may ſee the true nature of faith, that it is an anſwering God's faithfulneſs. I ſhewed then, 2. The reaſonableneſs of believing, that though corrupt reaſon be a great enemy to faith, yet there is nothing more reaſonable, that a reaſonable creature can do, than truſt the infallible God. 3. I ſhewed you, that hence you may ſee how faith glorifies God. 4. How it is that it conduces ſo much to the ſaving of the ſoul: it is called therefore frequently by Chriſtians *ſaving faith*; we are ſaved by faith, kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation; and believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

5. The

5. The *fifth* thing was to ſpeak a little of the eaſineſs of faith. If ſo be, that true faith be an anſwering of God's faithfulneſs, and truſting of God's word, it ſeems then to be a very eaſy act. I told you, that it is not eaſy to come by it, neither is it eaſy to act it, but it is eaſy in the acting. To prevent miſtakes about this on either hand, I would give you but theſe few things. 1*ſt*, Believing is hard and utterly impoſſible to every unrenewed, ungodly man: *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him*, ſays our Lord, John vi. 44. This word did break the necks of a great many of Chriſt's hearers: and in verſe 65. it is repeated, *Therefore ſaid I unto you*, ſays he, when they began to murmur, *that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*. A little now of this. Believing, as hath been ſaid, is but a truſting God's faithfulneſs in a promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt; it ſeems to be marvellous, that this ſhould be impoſſible to a natural man; naturally men think it very eaſy, all the ungodly think they can believe when they will. But how groſsly are they miſtaken about it! I would therefore ſhew a little whence it comes that it is impoſſible for a natural man to believe. That he cannot believe, is frequently ſpoken of in the ſcripture, John v. 44. *How can ye believe?* John xii. 39. *Therefore they could not believe;* the ſame truth is held forth in both places, they could not believe.

(1.) All natural men are unconcerned about thoſe great things which truſting in God is concerned about. Truſting in God, that is, true faith, is truſting in him through Chriſt Jeſus, for the great concernment of our eternal ſalvation, which is the pardoning of our guilty ſouls, and waſhing of them from all their defilements, with the ſubduing of all their corruptions. Now, do you not ſee plainly, that it is impoſſible, that a man ſhould truſt God for thoſe things, when he has no heart-concern about them? The matters that faith is employed about, and which truſting in God

God hath in its eye, are altogether remote from the thought and mind of a natural man; therefore they do but lie againſt God and themſelves, that ſay they truſt God with their eternal ſalvation upon his word, when their conſciences tell them that their eternal ſalvation was never ſo weighty with them, as the concerns of this poor frail life; and that they never were in ſo much earneſt in ſaying, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved;* as they are daily in ſaying, *What ſhall I eat? and what ſhall I drink? and wherewithal ſhall I be clothed?*

(2.) The natural man is ignorant of God, and truſting in God is impoſſible to all that do not know him. There is no truſting of an unknown God. Poor Pagans may worſhip an unknown God, but it is unacceptable worſhip, Acts xvii. 23. Formal hypocrites perform ſeveral duties of worſhip to God, though unknown; they may obey a commanding God, though unknown; all theſe are but ſinful practices: but truſting in an unknown God is impoſſible: *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*, ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſal. ix. 10. The reverſe of it is very plain; They that know not thy name, will not put their truſt in thee. When Paul gives an account of his faith, *I know*, ſays he, *whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. i. 12.

(3.) All natural men are poſſeſſed with that which is inconſiſtent with believing in God, with believing his word, or the truths contained in it. Hence is that great word of our Lord, John v. 44. *How can ye believe*, ſays he, *which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only?* Pray obſerve, that there is a greater depth of ſpirituality in theſe words of our Lord, than ordinary readers do perceive. It hath but a very bare and harſh ſound, for to make it to be this, How can you believe that ſeek honour and applauſe from men? The meaning principally of it is this, How can you believe as long as this is in your frame, that the honour that comes from

from God to you, and the honour given to God by faith, is not more dear to you than any thing else? A natural man can never give God the honour due to the name of his truth, and he cannot set all his rest and confidence upon that honour and reputation that the free grace of God in the gospel brings to him. *How can ye believe*, then, says Christ, &c.? Nay, a natural man hath not only unbelief in him, but the nature of the natural man is unbelief. The apostle cautions all of this, Heb. iii. 12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.* The apostle speaks of unbelief now, not only as a heart-sin, but as if the heart of the unbeliever were made up of unbelief, as if there were nothing in it but unbelief. In such there is no disposition to trust God upon his word; all the trust of the heart is lodged on creatures, it is lodged upon things of nought. This is the first thing, though I say believing is easy, you must not think that it is easy to a natural man, for to him it is impossible.

2*dly*, Neither is believing easy to a believer; otherwise what need is there of *the fight of faith*, as I named but just now? The fight of faith, and the warfare of faith, do not only stand in faith's fighting against all the impediments that are in its way, but in faith's fighting against the unbelief that is lodged in the same heart with it. The believer is not perfectly renewed; there are remnants of the heart of unbelief in him; and from these remnants it comes, that he neither can believe when he would, nor can he at any time believe as he would. *I believe*, says the good man, *Lord, help my unbelief.* He speaks like a man that knew this point well: "I believe, and I have "unbelief for all that; I will not deny my faith, be- "cause of my unbelief; I will not conceal my unbe- "lief, because of my faith; I will acknowledge the "one to thy praise, and the other to my own shame; "*Lord, help my unbelief*, Mark ix. 24." The thing then that I mean, when I say faith is easy, is, that

it is eaſy in the acting; there is no great difficulty in the acting of it, when once received. This I would ſhew you in two particulars.

(1.) Faith is ſweetly drawn forth. (2.) It ſweetly acts when it is drawn forth.

(1.) Faith is ſweetly drawn forth. The hand that works faith, deals gently with the ſoul. It is a drawing with *loving-kindneſs*, Jer. xxxi. 3.; it is a cauſing of a man to *approach* to God, Pſalm lxv. 4.; it is a drawing with ſuch an arm of love and power, as there is no pain in it, but a great deal of pleaſure; there is a heavenly pleaſure in feeling, as it were, the hand of God drawing the ſoul ſweetly and kindly to himſelf; it is a gentle motion. Now, here is the myſtery of the wiſdom of the grace of God: A natural heart is averſe from faith: but when the Lord comes to work faith, he offers no violence unto the nature of the man; the way whereby he overcomes unbelief, is by an overpowering, gracious influence of his Spirit, whereby people are made willing. This day of power makes a man willing, as the promiſe is, which, bleſſed be God, hath been often fulfilled, Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.*

(2.) It is kindly acted too: as the Lord works it kindly, ſo does the believer act it kindly. What is there in believing, that ſhould not be very kindly and ſweetly done? There is no other relief found for the diſtreſſed ſoul, but only in God through Chriſt Jeſus. This relief is found to be a very amiable and taking one. Is there any pain, think you; is there any trouble; is there any regret ſeizing upon the ſpirit of a poor creature, when he gives his conſent to a bleſſed bargain? When the condemned priſoner takes his pardon, what pain is there? is it not an eaſy thing to accept of a pardon? the captive is willing to have his chains looſed, and looſed by him that can take them off ſweetly. Sirs, the thing that I drive at is only this, and in it I do appeal unto all the conſciences of them that hear me, that ever knew what believing

lieving is, That when God proclaims his name, and ſhines in his glory in the promiſe, and draws the heart ſweetly towards himſelf, was there ever any thing you did in all your life more ſweetly done than to truſt God? It is one of the moſt cheerful acts that ever the ſoul put forth.

6. The ſixth inference is about the ſenſibleneſs of faith. If ſo be that faith anſwers God's faithfulneſs, why, then, ſurely it ſeems faith may be a ſenſible thing; my meaning is, that a man may know it when he does it. I know there are a great many believers who are very doubtful of their faith, and I believe they will be doubtful as long as they live, if they go that way to work that commonly they do. They want a clearer diſcovery of the cauſes and grounds of their faith, they want a clearer diſcovery of the fruits of their faith, and truly both the one and the other are pretty hard to be obtained. May I now offer an advice that may be ſhorter than this, and that is, *Look to faith itſelf.* The Spirit of God calls faith *an evidence*, Heb. xi. 1.; and is it ſo myſtical, ſo involved, ſo intricate a thing, that people muſt go ſo far about, as it were, to find it out? Pray go to faith itſelf: It is *the evidence of things not ſeen*, ſays the apoſtle. Faith brings light to dark things, but dark things will not bring light to it. I know the Spirit of God can ſhine upon faith, and the grounds of faith, and can make the fruits of faith appear to the comfort of his people; but in the ordinary practice of believers, if they would mend the acting of their faith more, they would come better to underſtand, whether they have it or not. It is a great word the apoſtle hath, 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God*, ſays he, *hath the witneſs in himſelf.* The words in the original had been better tranſlated, if it had been, *He that believes, hath the teſtimony in himſelf;* for *witneſs* ſometimes ſignifies the perſon, and ſo people commonly miſtake it; but the words are, *He that believes, hath the teſtimony in himſelf;* his faith re-

ceives the teſtimony of God about the truth of the goſpel, ſo that the man relies upon his faith, apprehends and has it. Now, to bring this matter unto conviction, that faith is a ſenſible thing, I would only aſk you theſe two things, Do you know what you think? and do you know what you do? Surely, if people can know neither of theſe, they can pretend to know nothing. But if you do know what you think, and what you do, I muſt infer this, that you muſt know when you believe, if you do believe. *1ſt*, What do you think? What think you of God, and of his faithful promiſe? Do you in your heart account him faithful? and do you account the promiſes ſure in your heart and thought? So faith is deſcribed in the words, *Sarah judged him faithful who had promiſed*, Heb. xi. 11. So that, in a manner, if Sarah had been to examine herſelf, Whether have I faith in God? the matter was to be determined thus, What doſt thou think of God? He hath paſſed his word to thee, doſt thou judge him faithful? David thought him ſo, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Pſal. l. 10. Paul thought him ſo, 2 Tim. i. 12. Cannot a man tell whether he judges God faithful in his great promiſes of ſalvation through Chriſt Jeſus? *2dly*, Cannot you tell what you do? In all other things people know what they do. A poor child can tell you plainly, as ſoon as it is able to ſpeak, whom it truſts for its daily bread and raiment. It is careleſs and thoughtleſs about the things of this life; and the ground the child can give, is this; My parents take care of me. Shall a child, as ſoon as come to the uſe of reaſon, argue ſo plainly as this? and ſhall not a child of God be able to do ſo too? Cannot you tell where you have lodged your great ſalvation? where you have lodged your darling? It is marvellous if people cannot do this; but I know and ſhall ſpeak farther of it. There are a great many Chriſtians dare not deny, that there is in them the direct act of faith, who yet, for the want of other things they would fain have, complain that they

they have not the comfort of the truth of their faith.

7. Hence we may ſee the greatneſs of the ſin of unbelief, ſo much ſpoken of in the word. Faith anſwers God's faithfulneſs; unbelief will not ſtir, but reflects on God's faithfulneſs: *He that believeth not God,* ſays the apoſtle, 1 John v. 10. *hath made him a liar;* made God a liar! A hard word. If it had been, He that believes not, is afraid that God is a liar, that is bad enough; and, He that believes not, calls God a liar, that is yet worſe; but this is a dreadful word, He that believes not, hath made God a liar. It is impoſſible he can make him ſo, it is impoſſible for God to lie; but the poor man does all he can to make him ſo, and ſhall be reckoned as if he had done the greateſt wrong and hurt to God imaginable. Unbelief is aggravated by two things up and down the world. *1ſt,* That it is the boldeſt and moſt provoking affront that a ſinful creature can give to God, not to believe his word. To call God weak, is blaſphemy; to call him fooliſh is blaſphemy; to deny him his eternal power and Godhead, all theſe are blaſphemy: but to deny his truth, is ſomething above theſe. See how it is among poor ſilly men. There is many a man will think it no great affront to be called poor; another will think it no great affront to be called weak and fooliſh, a man of ſmall parts to be called ſhallow; but to call a man that hath any thing of a principle of honeſty in him, a liar, this is not well to be endured. A man that hath a great many other infirmities, yet may be one that makes conſcience of what he ſays, Rom. iii. 4. Now, ſhall the pride of man riſe ſo readily againſt reflections of lying caſt upon him by his fellow-creatures, and yet ſhall he caſt this unſufferable affront upon the God of truth? The grand tranſgreſſion is to disbelieve God; and all that do not believe, do ſo. *2dly,* Unbelief hath this in it, that it is the moſt certain, the moſt ſure, and dreadful way of ruin to men; it brings deſtruction upon men with a ſpecial vengeance, *If ye*

believe

believe not that I am he, ſays our Lord, *ye ſhall die in your ſins*, John viii. 24. *If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloak for their ſin*, John xv. 22. See alſo verſe 24.

Now, of this inference, that is ſo native, concerning the greatneſs of the ſin of unbelief, there are two things mightily to be regarded. (1.) As great as this ſin is, and as ſurely damning as it is, yet it never diſturbs the conſcience of a natural ungodly man. He may be diſturbed in his mind for ſin, he may be diſturbed in his conſcience for his own lying, but is never diſturbed in his conſcience for calling God a liar; he may be diſturbed in his conſcience for his diſobeying God's law, but never thinks it a ſin to disbelieve God's promiſe; ſhaking off of God's authority and yoke of obedience, he may have ſome challenges for, but in deſpiſing God's grace and the offers of it in the goſpel, he is never diſquieted; therefore ſometimes you may marvel, whence this comes. A great many people, may be, have a hell-ſtorm raiſed in their conſciences, but wait a little while, and you will find, in many caſes, it comes to nothing; they are only ſeaſick, it is the effect only of ſome ſharp affliction, or ſome temptation, or ſome alarm upon conſcience: when they come to ſhore, and the weather grows fair, and the wind down, they are as quiet, and ſecure, and harder than ever they were. The reaſon is, becauſe they never were convinced of the ſin of unbelief; they never felt any thing in their exerciſe about this, that they have been great ſinners before God; becauſe this grace offered to them in Chriſt Jeſus was not made precious to them. More hopeful a great deal is the ſtate of that perſon who is bewailing the heart of unbelief, than of thoſe that are bewailing a covetous, worldly, proud, and filthy heart; though theſe deſerve their own bemoanings in their own places. (2.) As great as this ſin is, and as much as there is of it in the godly, yet it is a ſin that very rarely diſquiets even

even godly mens consciences. This is sad, that Christians are seldom troubled about their unbelief. Our Lord speaks concerning it, John xvi. 9. that he will send the Comforter to convince the world of sin, *because*, says he, *they believe not on me*. Moses may convince men of sin, of murther, of adultery, of swearing falsely, of profaning the holy day of God; Moses may convince them of a great many transgressions against the law; but the Spirit of God only can convince a believer of the sin of unbelief. Judge you now how rare this is, in all the professions, in all the humbling of believers, when they are alone. I pose your consciences about it; what Christian is there to be found? Not one among a thousand have their hearts broken, their consciences disquieting them, as broken bones within them, because of their unbelief, their jealousies of Christ's love, their doubting of the faithfulness of the promises: nay, of the same promises that they have believed formerly, and have given glory to God by believing, they take back again the glory by unbelieving. The most spiritual attainment of a Christian in the world, the most spiritual, evangelical mourning and repentance that can be acted by a Christian, is a mourning over his unbelief; that the word of the Lord is not more precious to him; that he cannot trust God's word barely without props; that he doubts of it so often, when darkness comes on; that he lets go his hold of this great rock, the faithfulness of God.

3. and *lastly*, The last inference is, That here we may see the wonderful wisdom of God, in twisting his glory with the eternal concerns of the children of men, and that both in the saving of the elect, and in the perdition of the unhappy remnant; for the elect are sometimes called *the remnant*, and the reprobates are sometimes also called by the same name. *The remnant are blinded*, says Paul, Rom xi. In the same place within two or three verses, the elect are called *the*

the remnant according to the election of grace, and the reprobates are called the *reſt that were blinded.* The Lord, I ſay, hath herein linked his glory marvellouſly with the eternal concernments of men. Thus, as to the ſalvation of the elect, God gives Chriſt for them, according to the eternal purpoſe of his heart: he gives the promiſe to them; he gives them faith, to lay hold on the promiſe; and he glorifies himſelf, and ſaves them in the performance of the promiſe: all theſe things are framed ſo together, that the glory of God ſhall be greatly advanced in ſaving of poor man. There is glory in electing love, there is glory in redeeming grace, there is glory in God's faithfulneſs in his word, this is glorified by the believing of the periſhing ſinner; and in and upon this believing, the performance of the promiſe, the applying of the redemption, the accompliſhment of the purpoſe of his grace, is at laſt reached. On the other hand, a great many under the goſpel periſh. Chriſt was never given for them, but he is offered unto them. The promiſes were never meant for them, but they are offered to them. No man periſhes, becauſe Chriſt died not for him; no man miſſes of the performance of the promiſe, becauſe the promiſe was not made to him; but he periſhes becauſe of his unbelief, becauſe the teſtimony of God was not looked upon as ſufficient ground to venture his ſoul upon, therefore he periſhes. And thus the Lord gets the glory of his juſtice and faithfulneſs upon thoſe wretches, that have denied to truſt him. The apoſtle joins both, 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9, 10. Our Lord is to take *vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* and this, *when he ſhall come*, ſays he, *to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed), in that day.* "You that have believed the teſtimony of God in the goſpel," ſays the apoſtle, "our Lord will be admired in you, and glo-

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"rified in that day." So much shall serve for the doctrinal inferences from this truth.

There is only one practical exhortation, but it is a large one, that I would deduce from it, and name it now; that is, Since believers should answer the faithfulness of God, I exhort you, in the Lord's name, to come with your faith and answer this faithfulness; believe as he hath promised.

I shall not enter upon the particulars of it now, only conclude in general with these three.

1. If you would answer the faithfulness of God by your faith, you must believe much, for God hath promised a great deal; our faith, I say, must be a great one, it must be a large one, we must believe a great many things, for God hath promised greatly; the covenant, if I may so speak, is a large charter, and our faith must seal every word in it; we must put the amen of our faith unto every true and faithful saying of God, Rev. xix. 9. and xxi. 5. and xxii. 6.

2. If you would answer the faithfulness of God by your faith, you must believe greatly; not only much, but strongly. The promises are strong in themselves, so should your faith be.

3. You must believe long. If your faith answers God's faithfulness as it ought, you must believe always, as long as promises are promises; and promises are promises still, till they be performed; and therefore faith should be faith still, and acted still, till the performance come. *Ye have need of patience*, says the apostle, *that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise*, Heb. x. 36. God's promises are for a great while to come, as David's word is concerning the Lord's kindness to him, *Thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house, for a great while to come*, 2 Sam. vii. 9. So that the answering of God's faithfulness by our faith, should bear proportion unto the greatness, largeness, freeness and length of the promise. We should look to the promise, and say, Here is a great blessing, when is it to be? Here

is a promiſe leads into eternity, I will believe til then, ſays the believer; till I launch into eternity; for there the grand expectation of the main fulfilments is to be.

SERMON IX.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promiſed.

YOU have all great need to ſtudy your bibles well. According to their diligence in uſing of the word of God, is the thriving of mens ſouls. There are theſe four things, that ſhould ſtill be minded in our uſing the bible.

1. To look on it all as the word of God. When this is impreſſed on the ſoul by faith upon opening the book, All this is the word of God, this is ſcripture inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, what a great favour does it leave upon the heart!

2. In uſing your bibles, be ſure to pick out the promiſes thereof. This is the main thing in the word, the teſtimonies of God's good-will to the children of men. People's ſpirits are diſcerned by this, what it is in that word they chiefly mind. Some folks read the bible as they read another hiſtory, and the hiſtorical part they like very well; ſome like the wiſe precepts of the word for the conduct of their lives, of which the ſcripture is full. But if ſo be you be Chriſtians indeed, the main thing you will ſpy out in the word, is, Where does God's good-will appear? What

What has God said for me? What good word has God passed that I may trust to, and be saved by?

3. When we have picked out the promises, we must then lay them to the heart; they never do good till they meet with the heart. What gracious changes hath God wrought, when he hath laid a warm promise to a cold heart! The fire of heaven kindles it immediately. We cannot put life into the promise, that is God's gift; we cannot put life into our own hearts, that is God's gift too; but we should strive to bring the heart and God's promise as near as may be. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart*, says David, Psalm cxix. 11. God's people do as it were eat the word, Jer. xv. 16.

4. *Lastly*, In using your bibles, be sure to pray over the promises. I assure you, where-ever faith hath got but a bit of the bread of life in the promise, it will immediately lift itself upwards in desires, and in breathings towards the Lord for performance. *For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.* David was a great believer, and he argues like one, 2 Sam. vii. 27. David needed those blessings that God promised, and in the sense of his need of them, he should and did pray for them: but when God gives him a promise, he prays then better for performance: and it is more of the nature of faith to pray upon a promise, than to pray for the supply of a want. The desires of supplies of wants are somewhat of the voice of nature, but breathings for the performance of promises are the very breathings of faith itself.

Now, this text that I have spoken from to you so often, is indeed but a short one, but it is in a manner the key of the Bible, *Faithful is he that promised.* I have spoke at large unto the observations from these words, besides what was taken notice of in the words with respect to their scope; as,

1. That the Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God; he is made known by promiſing; and he is never rightly known, but when known as a promiſing God.

2. That this promiſing God is faithful in all his promiſes.

3. That the faith of believers ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God; their faith ſhould come up in ſome meaſure of correſpondency with the faithfulneſs of the promiſer. Of this laſt I have ſpoke ſeveral times in opening up the doctrine, and began to apply it firſt in doctrinal inferences.

My work now is to enter upon the exhortation unto this anſwering of divine faithfulneſs by your faith, and I would extend it to theſe three.

1. Anſwer divine faithfulneſs in the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt in the goſpel. This is the beginning of faith, Heb. iii. 14.

2. Anſwer divine faithfulneſs in all the promiſes of grace and glory made to believers. This is the courſe and race of faith, Heb. xii. 1. 1 Corinth. ix. 24, 26.

3. Anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the grand promiſe of eternal life, to be poſſeſſed upon our departure out of this body. This is the beginning, this is the life, and this is the end of believing, 1 Peter i. 9.

For the firſt of theſe, the exhortation is this, (and it is an exhortation to every one of you, whether you be believers or unbelievers), Anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt in the goſpel, anſwer it by faith. This is that which is the ſcope of all the goſpel, this is the deſign of God in writing to us the goſpel. *But theſe are written*, ſaith the apoſtle, *that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name*, John xx. 30. This is what our Lord charges his apoſtles with: *Go*, ſaith he, *and preach the goſpel to every creature*; and as the apoſtle ſaith, *which was preached to every creature*

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which is under heaven, Col. i. 23.: that is, Every man and woman that lives in this world, preach the gospel to them; what gospel? Tell them that there is life and salvation for them in Jesus Christ; if they will believe it, well and good; if not, they *shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 15, 16. Upon this now, because it is a matter of great concernment unto people to be well informed about it, to be well roused up unto the practice of it, I would shew,

1. The nature of this promise that is to be believed.

2. The nature of that faith which is to answer the faithfulness of God in the promise.

First, For the nature of the promise of salvation by Christ in the gospel, which is the sum and substance of all the right preaching of the gospel, there are three mistakes very usual amongst people about it.

1. This promise is no declaring the eternal purpose of election. Though I know that the promise flows from the purpose, and is a proof that there is an election, yet the promise is no declaring of the particular purpose of election to any particular person. You are not commanded to believe the gospel because you are elected, but you are commanded to believe the gospel that you may know your election, and that of God. No man is cast into hell because not elected, (though all that are not so, shall be sent thither); but men under the gospel are damned, because they are unbelievers, and receive not the testimony of God.

2. Neither is this promise a declaration of the design of the redemption of Christ. A promise of the gospel does not declare nor determine whom Christ died for; it is not the nature of this promise, nor the design of it to do that. Christ hath laid down his life for his sheep; the promise is made to all, tho' none but his sheep will receive it: *Ye believe not*, says our Lord, *because ye are not of my sheep*, John x. 26.

3. Neither

3. Neither is the promiſe of the goſpel, the declaring of the effectual working of the Spirit upon the heart. It is the means that God works by, but it is not that which does declare the work. It is a bad argument for one to ſay, I know I am elected, and redeemed by Chriſt, and ſanctified and changed by the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe I have the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt in the goſpel. Indeed, if you can ſay, I have received the promiſe by faith, you ſpeak according to the word; then all the former are evident, the ſaving operation of the Spirit appears, thy intereſt in Chriſt's redemption appears; thy name is written in the book of life, and thou mayſt read it.

What then is the promiſe, if it be not a declaring of any of theſe? The promiſe of the goſpel is a declaration of God's good-will to ſave men by Chriſt Jeſus, and to this declaration he requires their faith. This good-will of God is tendered to men by promiſe, for wiſe ends.

1. By this means God brings in all the elect; by the means of the declaring his good-will in a promiſe. 1*ſt*, The promiſe is the means of their faith, and therefore is a ground of their faith. When the Lord, in the day of his power, makes uſe of the word, and ſends it home upon the heart, it begets faith; and as ſoon as faith is begotten, it acts upon the ſame word of promiſe from whence it ſprang. Now, here is the great wiſdom of God. His purpoſes are all kept hid with himſelf; he hath determined from eternity, in his own thoughts and decrees, the eternal ſtate of all men, and his counſel will ſtand; he hath his people whom he hath a mind to ſave, lying ſcattered up and down the world. There is no mark upon them that is viſible to any creature; they are in the ſame maſs, of the ſame lump, in the ſame ſtate, children of wrath even as others, as ripe for hell as any man. The Lord, to accompliſh the purpoſe of his grace, ſends the goſpel to them. The promiſe is no more to them in the diſpenſation of it, than it is to any body elſe.

I know

I know the promise in God's purpose is otherwise designed for them than for others; but this promise is cast abroad as an equal ground of security for all that will lay hold of it; and the poor elect man, when he ventures upon the promise of God, hath nothing before his eye but only the promise: "It is *a true and* "*faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation*, and there- "fore worthy of mine; I will give it due attention, "and lay hold of it."

2. By this means God stops the mouths of the condemned remnant of gospel-despisers. Pray observe the word that is in the parable, Matth. xxii. 10, 11. Though parables, you know, are not to be so strictly urged, yet there are somethings that are to be applied, and that is what serves the scope of them: When the King came to view his guests, he spied one without a *wedding-garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.* Pray observe; we find in the same feast the invitation is given to all sorts, the invitation is to good and bad; so the word is; and it is made effectual upon the lame, and blind, and halt, and most miserable that could be found by the hedges and highway-side, as Luke hath it, chap. xiv. 16. where the same parable is. Now, what can be the meaning of this, *Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?* Why, if the poor man had not a wedding-garment, whence should he get it? Should he not have fought it? All that makes us amiable and acceptable before God, is of the gift of his grace on us. That which is the perdition of the ungodly unbelievers of the gospel, is, because they do not receive the testimony of God; they dare not, they are not able, they are not willing, to trust their eternal salvation upon God's bare word. So much now for the nature of this promise. The promise is Christ's, and that which he casts forth in the dispensation of the gospel, and gathers in men thereby. Where the power of the promise reaches the

the heart, it draws in the choſen; where only a common power reaches carnal men, they are only drawn into a profeſſion, and are *caſt away* as loſt, as our Lord ſpeaks of the kingdom of heaven under the ſimilitude of a net to catch fiſh, Matth. xiii. 47, 48.

The *ſecond* thing to be ſpoke to is, What is that faith that is to anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe, the general promiſe of ſalvation in the goſpel?

1. It is to believe the goſpel-report firmly concerning Jeſus Chriſt, and God's great ſalvation in him and by him; that there is life enough in Chriſt for men, 1 John v. 11. It is to believe the report concerning Chriſt, according to the prophet Iſaiah, chap. liii. 1. Which words our Lord applies unto the goſpel, more plainly to himſelf, John xii. 40. where he applies the words of the ſame Iſaiah unto the unbelievers that were in his own days. Some folks may poſſibly think there is no great difficulty in this matter; but it is becauſe they are ignorant, and have never been tried. How hard a matter is it to believe the myſtery of the goſpel, that the Father hath ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; that he came in the appointed time, that he did all his work, and obtained eternal redemption for us; that he bought all his ſheep by the price of his blood, and by that blood entered into covenant to make interceſſion for us? and that becauſe he is there, *he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him?* as in Heb. vii. 25. Pray obſerve this, when a great many Chriſtians doubtings are thoroughly ſifted and canvaſſed, it will be found that the ſhaking of their faith, as to their intereſt in Chriſt, proceeds much from the weakneſs of their faith as to the goſpel-report concerning him. If people did firmly believe all that is ſaid in the old and new teſtament, concerning that righteouſneſs and ſalvation wrought out by the Son of God, they would find it an eaſier matter to apply

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it to themſelves, and ſay, Surely, (1.) I have no righteouſneſs of my own. (2.) Nor can any creature procure it for me. (3.) Enough is in Chriſt. (4.) All is offered to me in the goſpel. (5.) My ſoul likes the offer. (6.) I willingly accept him for my only Saviour. *Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24.

2. It is to believe firmly the truth and the ſincerity of God in the offer of this Saviour, and of all his ſalvation as offered to men. Pray obſerve here we ſhall come to that which does pinch the conſciences of many Chriſtians. Ye are required by the Lord, and in his name, by them that preach the goſpel, to believe the truth and ſincerity of the offer of Chriſt and all his ſalvation to thee in particular. You are to think thus within yourſelves, Verily this Saviour, and all his great ſalvation is offered to me. Pray what conceptions have you of the goſpel, if you do not admit this? For you to run away with an imagination, that Chriſt is offered unto the church, that he is offered unto his people, is wrong. I tell you, in the goſpel he is offered to you in particular; and there are none that believe in him, until they take it up ſo. Says the poor jailor, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Believe thou on the Lord Jeſus*, ſays Paul to him, *and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* I am preaching Chriſt, and I have got bonds for my reward; but if thou wouldſt be ſaved, remember that I in priſon offer this Saviour to thee: *Believe thou on the Lord Jeſus and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* Unleſs people do come this length of faith, firmly to believe, that God fairly and honeſtly, and with an upright meaning, makes free offer and tender of Chriſt and of all his ſalvation to them; they never will be believers, they never will believe the ſcriptures aright.

3. You are to believe that there is no impediment nor hinderance, neither on God's part nor thine, to hinder thee from partaking of Chriſt, if thou be willing. This is a part of that faith that anſwers the

faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe of the goſpel, and which a poor creature ſhould believe firmly; that there is no impediment on God's part, nor on my part to hinder my partaking of Chriſt, according to God's offer, if I accept of him. The impediment on our part is ſin, the impediments on God's part are the law and juſtice. The Lord hath declared theſe ſhall not ſtand. The law and juſtice ſtands in no man's way to hinder him from partaking of Chriſt, if he will accept thereof. Neither ſhall ſin hinder him, for the offer is made to all men as ſinners, whatſoever they have been, and whatſoever they are; but none will accept it but enlightened ſinners.

4. You are required to venture your ſalvation on Jeſus Chriſt, according to the warrant of this offer, and according to the truth of this promiſe. As you believe the doctrine of Chriſt, and believe the offer of God, and the ſincerity, and freedom, and largeneſs of the offer, you are to accept thereof, and to venture your all upon it. This is believing. God has given his promiſe of life in Chriſt Jeſus, as the foundation of all our hope of ſalvation; we ſhould anſwer his faithfulneſs by building all our hopes upon that bottom. Lay hold therefore on this cord of ſalvation, and ye cannot miſcarry. No man can receive Chriſt out of a promiſe, no man can receive a promiſe of ſalvation out of Chriſt: no man can do both, no man can do any one of them without faith; for believing is receiving; and none who believe on him can periſh, but ſhall *have eternal life*, John iii. 14, ----20.

5. *Laſtly*, You are to believe firmly, that if you be willing, the Lord is willing, and you ſhall be welcome; nay, you are now welcome at this preſent on believing. I ſay you are to believe firmly, that when your hearts are drawn forth to accept of him, the Lord will accept of you, and to be confident of it too. Now, I ſhall offer for the clearing of this, as far as ſome ordinary tranſactions amongſt men may help, ſome inſtances

ſtances which the Spirit of God makes uſe of in the word to illuſtrate this affair, this firſt believing the promiſe of Jeſus Chriſt, or a poor ſinner's firſt believing. I know all ſimilitudes that are uſed in the word, or can be contrived by us, are but like parables, they do not quadrate fully; but I ſhall uſe them no farther, than as ſhall ſerve the ſcope and drift of this doctrine.

The *firſt* is a common tranſaction of mankind, that of *marriage*. You all know how this matter is carried on. The tranſaction with God in Chriſt Jeſus for our eternal ſalvation, is frequently expreſſed by this ſimilitude: *I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies,---and thou ſhalt know the Lord*, Hoſea ii. 19, 20. *I have eſpouſed you*, ſays the apoſtle, *to one husband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. The expreſſions are manifold up and down the word, both in the old and new teſtament, about this ſimilitude. Now, to bring it to my purpoſe, you know when a marriage is made up, eſpecially of them that are vaſtly unequal, as it is here, the man declares his love, courts the party, affirms, that if ſhe will give her conſent to be his, he is heartily willing to be hers. The promiſe upon the man's ſide makes no marriage; but the promiſe duly declared by the man, and duly accepted by the woman, makes one. The promiſe of the goſpel comes this way to you, ſinners; it is the faithful promiſe of God in Chriſt Jeſus, that if you will accept of him through Chriſt for your God and portion, he will be yours; give but your conſent, and the match is made. But if the party that is courted ſay or think, (1.) That either the bargain is not good; or, (2.) That the man that promiſes is not true; or, (3.) If her affections are ſet on another; or, (4.) If ſhe be married to another, Rom. vii. 6; or, (5.) If ſhe hate him, Prov. viii. 36.; in theſe

caſes ſhe will with-hold her conſent. In like manner aſſure yourſelves, that all goſpel-hearers who do not give their hearty conſent to be the Lord's, will be chargeable with ſome of theſe; for either they think, that the bargain is not good, or that he that promiſes is not true, or their affections are ſet on other objects, or they hate the ways of the Lord.

2*dly*, There is a tranſaction ſpoken of in the word under the notion of *adoption*. It is now out of uſe in the world, but it was cuſtomary of old, when a man did adopt another's child, and brought in that child to poſſeſs the inheritance, to bear his name, and to be his heir. There were uſual formalities, as good reaſon there ſhould be, where ſuch matters are; the conſent of the child was required; Are you willing to be ſuch a man's? to be under his conduct? to be his heir? to be poſſeſſed of his eſtate? The very declaring of the conſent is that which makes up the relation.

The *third* inſtance ſhall be that of the *King's pardon* given to a company of rebels. So the goſpel is God's act of grace unto a company of ſinners; it is proclaimed as publicly as may be; and the more ſinners that hear it, the better, if they would believe. Now, ſuppoſe there be ſuch a thing as proclamation of free pardon to a company of rebels, it is unavoidable, that their not accepting of it muſt be, either, 1. Becauſe they think their cauſe is juſt, and themſelves not to be rebels; or, 2. That they have ſtrength enough to fight it out; and if they come in, they ſhall be hanged; if ſo, they will rather die in their arms, they will *ſtand upon their ſword*, as the word of the prophet is, rather than accept of it. But if they have any hopes of pardon upon their ſubmiſſion, and believe the perſon who promiſes pardon on ſuch terms, will ſtand to his word; they will accept of it, and embrace it. The caſe is juſt ſo here: Proclamation of God's free grace and pardon through Chriſt Jeſus, is tendered to the children of men; it is neceſſarily required

quired to the accepting it, that you have a truſt in the good-will of the proclaimer, as well as confidence, that the mercy is great that is tendered.

We ſhall conſider this contract, *4thly*, as in the caſe of *ſurety* and *debtor*, for ſo it is repreſented to us in the word. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great Surety; we are great debtors, not able to pay; Chriſt offers to pay our debts; there is no more required, when the law and juſtice condemn us to hell-priſon, but, *Lord, take bail of my own Son for me.* But if men will pay part of the debt, and work out the reſt, they deſpiſe the goſpel; as too many do.

There is a *fifth* ſimilitude common amongſt us, and that is of *buyer* and *ſeller*, all managed by faith. In buying and ſelling, you know how frequently this is uſed amongſt men. (1.) We will ſuppoſe we know this, that the man that ſells, is willing to part with his goods at the price named, otherwiſe he is a deceitful man that offers things, to ſell, and will not part with them. (2.) We all know this, that if I come up to the price demanded, and pay it down, the goods are mine. Bring this matter to our purpoſe: The great goods are Chriſt and ſalvation, the price is nothing, the poor ſinner is the buyer; now, this little price; this no price, this no money, is ſo great a matter, that proud poor man is very unwilling to lay it down. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and without price*, Iſa. lv. 1. *I counſel thee to buy of me*, &c. Rev. iii. 18. Then if they be *buyers*, they had ſomething to *buy* with; no, they had nothing; for our Lord tells them in the verſe juſt before, that they were *wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Now, what can ſuch folks have to buy with? Goſpel-buying is nothing elſe but honeſt begging. But notwithſtanding the goſpel be ſo freely offered, many ſay to God, as Abraham ſaid to the king of Sodom,

I will

I will not take any thing that is thine, leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, I have made Abraham rich, Gen. xiv. 23.

Begging is a *ſixth* ſimilitude by which this matter is expreſſed; begging and receiving. God offers, we beg; God gives, we take; and all begging of God is in faith. We have ſome kind of faith, that God hath theſe good things to give, and is willing to give, elſe wherefore do we ask them? When he gives them, we receive them. Have you received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord? *As ye have received him, ſo walk ye in him*, ſays the apoſtle, Col. ii. 6. From all theſe now you ſee, that the tranſactions amongſt men, in all ſorts of affairs almoſt, do diſcover the relation that is entered into, and that covenants are made amongſt men by mutual truſt; that we truſt him that promiſes, and accept the bargain becauſe we do ſo: So muſt there be here. Only there are two great differences in this great bargain of the goſpel, which are beyond all that we can gather out of any ſimilitude. (1.) That the conſenting truſt of the receiver, is the work of the offerer; this truſt, this faith, this receiving that we have ſpoken of, is God's work. He that propoſes a good bargain to another, hath no power over him to perſuade him, infallibly to give his conſent; but the Lord hath this power. (2.) The nature of God's proffer, and his promiſe, are the means by which he works the principle of acceptance. When the ſinner is rebellious, (as all men by nature are, till grace tame them), the Lord can deliver the promiſe of promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus in that beauty and glory, and with that power and ſtrength, that no man can reſiſt it: *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 3. If the Lord put forth this power, this willingneſs, this truſt, that I am calling for, will infallibly be produced.

So much now for the explaining of theſe things, what the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt in the goſpel is, that we ſhould glorify God's faithfulneſs in, and what that faith is that we ſhould meet this promiſe with.

APPLICATION.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence you may ſee the marvellous way of ſaving us by Chriſt Jeſus. What wonderful grace and wiſdom ſhines here! All this ſalvation was prepared in God's counſel before the foundation of the world was laid, we had nothing to do with it; all this ſalvation was wrought out in God's time, by the life, and death, and ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus; that which he had no hand in, and in which all our ſalvation ſtands; for all that, all this grace and mercy, and ſalvation comes ſtreaming unto us in a bare promiſe of God; the Lord proclaims it; this is the call of the goſpel, He that dares truſt Chriſt with his ſoul, upon the warrant of the goſpel, ſhall be ſaved for ever. The Lord tries people this way. We have no more to do but take pen in hand, and ſay, Amen, O Lord; it is a good bargain, and a true word, and I will truſt my ſoul on it. This is believing.

2. See, Sirs, what you have been doing under the goſpel all your days. I know that this aſſembly, as moſt weekly aſſemblies are, is made up of a ſort of people that ſpend a great part of their time in hearing. For God's ſake tell me, what you have been doing all this while. Have you put the main matter of your ſalvation out of the devil's reach? Have you made conſcience of this, of giving glory to God's faithfulneſs in the grand promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt? Have you learned to know Chriſt? Have you learned to talk of him? Have you learned to underſtand the goſpel? to talk, to reaſon, to diſcourſe of it? But is this all? Have you never been exerciſed about this, about putting your own ſeal to the goſpel? *He that hath received this teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true.* God will be true, whether we ſet our ſeal to it or no; but God's truth will not be to our intereſt and advantage, unleſs we ſet to our ſeal. Take heed, there are few folks, whoſe conſcience falls under

der conviction of duty in this matter; that they are bound before God to believe on Chriſt Jeſus for eternal life. People will not believe, that they ſhould believe; and can there be any hope that ever they will believe, who are of this mind? How hard is it to perſuade people that they ſhould believe; that upon the preaching of the word, and the proclamation of God's ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, they muſt venture upon it! Say ſome, "I know not whether the promiſe be to me." Is it not to you as much as ever it was to any? Is it not to you as much as ever it hath been to any ſinner, the hour before he was converted? The promiſe will never be more to you, till it be believed, than it is now. *Repent*, ſays the apoſtle to the murtherers of Chriſt, *for the promiſe is unto you*, Acts ii. 38, 39. Ye killed the promiſer juſt now, yet for all that you ſhall be ſaved, if you repent; one of the ſtrangeſt repentance that ever was required in this world! The very exacting repentance from them was expreſly exacting of faith; for it was impoſſible for any man to repent of killing Chriſt, but he that believed he was the Son of God; therefore, ſays the apoſtle, *the promiſe is unto you, and to your children.* Say you, "Natural men are without the promiſe, "*and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe*," Eph. ii. 12. And what then? If they be, what will you infer from that? I am a poor natural creature, a ſtranger from that covenant of promiſe. But I pray, how ſhall this ſtrangeneſs be removed? Juſt as if a poor man, ſtanding without like to ſtarve with hunger and cold, ſhould ſay, Alas! I ſhall die in this place, without the houſe. Why, the door is open, in God's name enter. We enter by faith; the promiſe is God's door caſt open, that poor men may enter in. Pray now conſider that place, which I will ſpeak a little to, as well as from the preceeding and following words: Heb. iv. 1. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* The thing that the apoſtle

apoſtle deduceth his exhortation from, is a moſt awful inſtance; the inſtance of the people of Iſrael in the wilderneſs. Take notice of the paſſage, and of the Spirit of God's uſing it. God had ſaid to Moſes, that, at the appointed time, he would bring the children of Iſrael out of Egypt. He appeared with them, and for them, in ten great wonders and miracles, that they might know his calling to be of God, and his meſſage from God. The people believe at laſt; they believe that God had a good mind towards them, and would bring them into the land of Canaan, according to his promiſe; but when they are a little way got through the Red-ſea, difficulties meet them, unbelief ariſes, and they hardened their hearts, and tempted God; from whence we may obſerve, *How long*, ſays the Lord, *refuſe ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* That which they were bound to believe, was this, That God meant well and honeſtly with them in the promiſe of bringing them to the land of Canaan; and becauſe they did not believe it, God ſware, that not one of them from twenty years old ſhould enter into it. Upon this inſtance the apoſtle makes his exhortation: *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Alas! the reſt we are called to, is a far greater reſt than the reſt of Canaan, the promiſe is a promiſe more ſure. Ay, but ſays the apoſtle, *Let us fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*, leſt we ſhould *fall after the ſame example of unbelief*, as he has it in ver. 11. The caſe then, as to us, is this, The Lord hath proclaimed to us in the goſpel, his good-will in high and great promiſes, to ſave us by Jeſus Chriſt. He proclaims it thus, that whoſoever will truſt him, and take his promiſe, ſhall certainly come to heaven. There are ſome of the children of men, whom God hath a mind to bring to heaven, and a great many others have the promiſe in their hand, as well as they, but have not

faith in their hears; they let the promiſe ſlip, and the promiſe lets them ſlip; and, if I may ſo ſpeak, to hell they fall; but there is no fault in the promiſe, it is becauſe they do not build upon it.

Some may ſay, "I am not qualified for the pro-"miſe, I am not ſo good as I ſhould be. *Anſwer*, Are you qualified for hell or no? No man ſhall be in heaven but he that ſees himſelf fully qualified for hell, as a faggot that is bound up for eternal burnings, unleſs mercy pluck the brand out of the fire. Inſtead of theſe objections, I will tell you better, 1. What think you? Is Chriſt a fit Saviour for you? Chriſt is exactly ſhapen, as fit for a ſinner as poſſibly he can be. God, in making and framing his Son for a Saviour, conſulted to make him as fit to be a Saviour for ſinners, as divine wiſdom could make him. 2. Ask this queſtion, whether there be no promiſe in the new covenant that looks towards you? Are there no ſtreams in this great well of ſalvation? Yes, ſurely, the covenant ſtreams out towards thee. Pray now can you find nothing in the promiſe of the new covenant that ſuits you exactly? *I will pour clean water upon you:* who needs this more than the filthy? *From all their iniquities will I cleanſe them. I will take away the heart of ſtone*, &c. If you have a heart of ſtone, your cure is in the covenant. My meaning is, that you, feeling the heart of ſtone, may plead this promiſe. I know nobody that hath a hard heart can plead this promiſe; they that have a truly hard heart, think nothing ails them. 3. The third queſtion you ſhould ask yourſelves is this, Whether there is any truſt in your heart working towards God? Shall all the promiſes of the goſpel be proclaimed to men every day, and no thoughts of truſting in him ariſe? That he is a faithful ſpeaker, is plain; therefore his meſſage ſhould be received. The myſtery of ſaving particular perſons by the application of divine grace, is greater than any can fathom, with reſpect to themſelves, but more or leſs they can ſearch it with reſpect

to

to others. All the faith that ever was wrought in the hearts of believers, to make unbelievers believers, and make believers better believers, was ever-more wrought by the appearance of divine faithfulneſs in the promiſe. The better you know the promiſe, the better believers you will be; therefore make conſcience of this. Think that your eternal ſtate depends upon this, how the goſpel hath been received by faith. Secure ſinners find no difficulty in believing, but poor awakened ſinners find it the greateſt difficulty in the world. A natural man finds no difficulty in believing, becauſe he is not concerned about ſalvation; a poor awakened ſinner finds it a hard matter to believe, becauſe he is deeply concerned about ſalvation. Nothing can ſave us but only the bare promiſe. This promiſe can ſave no man till it hath laid hold on him, and till it hath put forth its power upon him. It uſually appears but a weak and ſlender thing for a man to truſt his all upon. How ſlightly do unbelievers think of the promiſe of God? There is not an ungodly man in the world, but he reckons a rich man's promiſe to provide for him in this world, is a great deal better than all the promiſes in the bible. But this is a ſign the poor creature hath no true faith in a faithful God, whatever falſe truſt he may have in man, who is not only a *liar*, Rom. iii. 4. but a *lie*, Pſalm lxii. 9.

SERMON X.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promiſed.

LITTLE do many people know, that daily hear the goſpel, what the goſpel is, and what hearing of it ſhould be. The goſpel is a divine proclamation of God's good-will towards periſhing ſinners, delivered to us in many words in the ſcriptures. The ſum of it is in this offer, That whoſoever they be, and whatever they have been, they are content to take Chriſt for their guide, and his fulneſs and grace for their ſtock, and God's faithful promiſe for their ſecurity, as ſure as God lives they ſhall be ſaved for ever. This is the goſpel which is preached in many forms of words, but the ſubſtance is the ſame. How many are they that do not know what they are doing when they hear? It is a proclamation that is either received to God's higheſt praiſe by faith, or is rejected to his greateſt diſhonour, and to mens moſt certain ruin. It is the Lord's great wiſdom that the goſpel ſhould be preached, and that it ſhould be preached by men, by ſinful men that are believers themſelves; and they ſhould recommend the ſame way of ſalvation to the faith of others, that they have taken to themſelves.

Upon theſe words you know that I have ſpoken ſeveral times concerning the promiſing God, his faithfulneſs in his promiſes, and the duty of his people to anſwer his faithfulneſs by their faith. The laſt day I propoſed the application of this whole matter in three exhortations, and ſpake unto the firſt laſt day; I ſhall now add a little more and proceed.

1. The

1. The firſt exhortation was to this duty, That you ſhould all anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the great promiſe of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel; for in a manner this is the promiſe that faith firſt meets with, and firſt fixes on; faith is begotten by it, and faith receives the new life in it, and by it.

2. The ſecond exhortation is, That believers muſt anſwer the faithfulneſs of this promiſing God, in the expecting of all good by the way

3. That believers ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, in a firm expectation of the inheritance at laſt.

Of the firſt of theſe I ſpoke ſome time laſt day, and ſhewed you, 1. What the nature of this promiſe of ſalvation is, that our faith firſt ſhould take hold of.

2. Wherein the anſwering of faith to the faithfulneſs of God does conſiſt. *1ſt*, In believing the truth of the goſpel-record and report, that there is life in Chriſt for men. *2dly*, It is a believing of the truth and ſincerity of God in the offer of it. *3dly*, A believing that there is now no impediment on God's part, or on ours, that ſhall hinder the partaking of the bleſſing promiſed, if we will be willing to truſt. The laſt is, by venturing our eternal ſalvation upon it; that is believing, taking up, taking in the truth of the goſpel-promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt, that the heart is reſolved here to ſettle, and here to adventure its all. *Lord, to whom ſhall we go?* ſays Peter; *thou haſt the words of eternal life:* we will lodge our eternal life on thee, and upon thy word: no where elſe can we find them, and they are ſufficiently with thee for our truſt; for *we believe and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God*, John vi. 69.

The only thing I would do, before I leave this firſt exhortation, ſhall be a little more fully to bring this matter near to your conſcience, ſearching and trying of you, whether you have given this faithfulneſs of God a meeting; the queſtion is a queſtion of the greateſt importance, all things elſe, that you may be concerned

concerned about, and there are a great many other things that people may lawfully be concerned about under the goſpel, all things elſe I ſay, are either trifles in themſelves in regard to this, or very unreaſonably ſtarted till this grand queſtion be determined, Have I entertained God's offer and promiſe of eternal life by Chriſt Jeſus with true faith or no? The importance is obvious, for our eternal ſalvation ſtands upon it; the queſtion is not only important, but it ſeems eaſily reſolved, it ſeems to be a great deal harder one way to conceive how a believer ſhould be ignorant of his believing, than how it ſhould be that he ſhould know it: though I do acknowledge that many believers are ignorant that they are believers; the apoſtle's word puts it out of queſtion, 1 John v. 13. *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*, that is, that ye may believe better, that ye may know ye believed, and that ye may know what ye have in and by believing; The apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of it as a matter of wonder that people ſhould not know it. *Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own ſelves; know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?* Only now a few things concerning this matter, that will make it on a little enquiry appear at leaſt to be eaſily reſolved.

1. The greatneſs of the matter intruſted in this believing; the more conſiderable the matter of truſt is, the better people uſually know where they truſt it, and when they truſt it; if a man truſt his wife and children, his eſtate, his houſe, and all his buſineſs, he knows very well when he truſts that which is ſo dear to him; but alas, a great many never knew they had ſouls, the preciouſneſs of their immortal ſouls was never felt by them; theſe folks can never truſt, or know whom they truſt.

2. The

2. The party trusted is one, one only; when our trust is scattered as it were, people may forget where one part of it is lodged, and where another part; but where it is all unitedly centered in one hand, why should people not know where it is? *I know*, says the apostle, *whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. i. 12. O how blessedly these two words answer one another, *Faithful is he that promised*, and *I know*, &c. There is God's name, and there is the faith of the Christian concerning this God: It is he whom I have trusted, he that promises, is he whom I have believed; whereas *a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*, James i. 8.

3. The warrant of this trust is single, it is upheld by the word of promise, and that alone, that separate from all things else; all our hopes are founded barely upon the word of God, and the more we strive (as you have heard already) to add supports to the word, for the imaginary strengthening of our faith, the more we weaken our faith, and the more we dishonour the word. If God's word of promise cannot bear thee up, though all the shoulders of all the angels in heaven should prop thee up, thou wouldst sink under them.

4. The influence and power that is needful for the drawing forth this trust, makes it remarkable also; when God *causes* us *to hope*, as David speaks, Psalm. cxix. 49. this makes the matter yet more remarkable; if faith and trust in God were a plant that could grow up in our hearts daily, it might spring up unobserved, as a great many other things do; there are a great many seeds of knowledge and understanding, that do naturally grow up in children, as they grow in years, from the stock of natural parts that God gave them in their first frame; but faith is none of these things, this trusting is never without a causing, a causing to approach to him; it is never without a drawing: Therefore believers are more sensible of the power that works faith, than of that

faith

faith working in themſelves, they are more ſenſible of the pains God hath been at to draw forth faith, than of the living acts of faith in themſelves.

5. The ſight of faith is to be taken notice of; as in Gen. xxv. 22, 23.

6. *Laſtly*, The grand expectation of faith is of that nature, that we cannot tell how it can be acted, tho' it may be known after it hath been acted. What do we take Chriſt's word for, and ſet our ſeal to it, but for everlaſting ſalvation, for a glory to be revealed at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt, beyond what our ear hath heard, or tongue can tell, or heart can conceive? *And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee*, Pſalm xxxix. 7. *We are not of them who draw back into perdition, but of them that believe, to the ſaving of the ſoul*, Heb. x. 39. We are *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal life*, Jude 21. Now may not one know theſe things, think ye? Nay, there is a ſpecial weakneſs in faith, a ſpecial cunning of our adverſary the Devil, that makes this believing not more frequently known by believers, that we do not know that we truſt, when we truſt; the matter is ſo conſiderable, the acts ſo formally and deliberately put forth, that a man may believe, and yet not be ſenſible of it; but by the fruits and effects of believing, which are the ordinary ways by which we come to know it. Therefore now unto ſuch of you, as can with ſome confidence avow it before God, that the goſpel promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus hath been ſo warm upon your hearts, that you have built your everlaſting hopes upon it, only three words, and I proceed.

1*ſt*, Bleſs the Lord, the great promiſer, for the work of faith, and that on his promiſes; praiſe is due upon both accounts, his grace made the promiſes, and his grace works upon the heart, which is always needful to embrace the promiſe; and the heart that partakes of the bleſſing, ſhould entertain a due ſenſe of its great debt to God, and pay it in praiſe; that

that is all the payment we can give, though praising is rather owning a debt than paying it.

2dly, You that have built your salvation and eternal hopes upon the promise of the gospel, rest yourselves on him; whatever your state and condition in the world be, you are blessed by God, and should own it; *Blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance*, Luke i. 45. How many blessednes are ascribed unto believing and trusting in God? *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him*, Psalm ii. 12. Here now is a fault that is very frequent with the godly, they are ready to be sensible of mercy, and to bless God for mercy, they are sensible of promises, they bless God for making of them, and when God makes a performance of a promise, they bless him for that too; this is the thing I find fault with, that few Christians are heartily thankful to God for trusting, for believing; a poor child of God can look upon the promise, and say, Here is a full promise but no performance, no appearance in the world for performance, yet God be thanked, I can trust it, and believe his faithful word, and wait till his time comes.

Lastly, You that have built your salvation and eternal hopes upon the promise of the gospel, never recal that trust but react it every day; the righteousnes of God is revealed from faith to faith, and believers should go on believing the promise of salvation that we believed at first believing; we are to believe still more and more, growing in faith; for faith is a grace to be grown in as well as knowledge, and repentance, and holiness; how many believers are there that are sensible of the one, and insensible of the other? They are easily convinced that they can never be holy enough, but they are not easily convinced, that they cannot believe strongly enough, that there is something still lacking in their faith, that they should labour to build up and to advance in more and more; if I may so speak, faith is something like a believer, believing is like a believer, a believ-

er is never perfect till he is dead, and faith is never perfect till it is done: I mean, there is always ſome failing in our believing till believing is ended, and ſeeing comes in its room. *As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving*, Col. ii. 6, 7. Wherein obſerve the variety of expreſſions concerning faith. 1. There is *Receiving*. 2. *Walking*. 3. *Rooting*. 4. *Building*. 5. *Stabliſhing*. 6. *Abounding*. To which is added, 7. *Thankſgiving*.

This leads me to the ſecond exhortation, and that is, *that we ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God by believing, that all promiſed good things ſhall be given unto you, by the way*. This is a needful anſwering the faithfulneſs of God, to believe all good by the way, and to believe nothing but good; this is believing, to expect all good by the way from God, and nothing but good; ſo his promiſe runs, and Oh! That our faith could faſten upon it, and kindle with that gracious promiſe a flame of love. If fire from heaven would fill the altar and kindle the ſacrifice, to wit, our faith, what a bleſſed meeting would it be? *And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. xxxii. 40. Pray obſerve, we are not only to expect all good from God, but are to expect from God that all good ſhall be with us; we are not only to believe he will do us always good, but we are to believe, we ſhall believe, we are to believe our faith ſhall never fail, for that is a part of the promiſe. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me*. God's faithfulneſs is equally engaged in keeping his people from departing from him, as it is engaged in his not departing from them; he that ſays, *I will not turn away from them to do them good*, has alſo ſaid, *they ſhall not depart from me*. Now what follows, ver. 41. *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them*

them good, and I will plant them in this land, (that is a part of the Old Testament type from the body of the new covenant) *assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.* Were ever such words spoken by God, *with my whole heart, and with my soul?* Now who can understand what is in this? God's whole heart, God's whole soul is in this promising, and should not the believer's whole heart and whole soul, be in the believing of it? Why this is but reasonable, that we should give God a meeting, this way has he promised to do me good, with his whole heart and his whole soul, and shall not I trust him with my whole heart and my whole soul? Psal. cxix. 58. Prov. iii. 6. this is soon said, but it is not so soon done.

I shall therefore upon this exhortation speak a little to these two particulars.

1. The grounds of this faith that I am calling for.
2. The cases wherein this is especially to be acted.

1. As to the grounds of this faith that I am calling for, the answering God's faithfulness in the promise, in expecting good from him; the grounds are two.

1*st*, From the state of the believer. 2*dly*, From the nature, and order, and condition of the covenant.

1*st*, From the state of the believer, what sort of a man is a believer? He is one that is brought within the chariot *paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem*, Cant. iii. 10. Every one that is brought to heaven, is carried in that chariot, love all over, bottom and top and all the sides of it; every believer is a prisoner of love, he is guarded by love, till he come to heaven; every believer is an heir of promise, the promises are his, he may count them in his estate; all the charter we have, is the promise. God is our father, Christ is our redeemer, the Holy Ghost is our sanctifier, heaven is our inheritance, promises are our charter: Such a man as this, that is an heir of promise, surely should expect the fulfilling of the promises, the estate his father hath given him, and may expect to be dealt with accordingly.

2*dly*, The nature of the covenant calls for the anſwering of our faith unto God's faithfulneſs, as to all good by the way.

1. All good and nothing but good is in the covenant; all bleſſings are in it, and every thing that is in it, is a bleſſing, becauſe it is in it; if the rod be in the covenant, as it is, it is good, becauſe it is there; and it will be found to be good when we meet it. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me*, thou haſt kept thy promiſe to me, Pſalm cxix. 75. and ver. 65. *Thou haſt dealt well with thy ſervant, O Lord, according unto thy word.*

2. There is this in the covenant, that truſt is God's appointed way for the getting the performance; the Lord hath given many great promiſes to us in the covenant, and he expects to be truſted when he promiſes, if we would have the accompliſhment of what we want. Beſides all the great promiſes of the new covenant, obſerve thoſe mentioned in Ezek. xxxvi. 25.-------37. *Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you*, &c. After all which is added, *Thus ſaith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.* It was for Iſrael's ſake that the promiſe was made, yet he will have Iſrael's faith and prayers called upon and brought forth, in order to the accompliſhment of them. As the brazen ſerpent healed thoſe that beheld it, Numb. xxi. 9. and as Jordan healed Naaman, after he had *dipped himſelf ſeven times*, 2 Kings v. 14. or as Eliſha's ſtaff would not raiſe up the dead ſon, 2 Kings iv. 31. So, unleſs we addreſs ourſelves to God by prayer for the performance of his promiſes, which cannot be done without truſting in him, we cannot expect to receive any real advantages by the promiſes: But if we do make our ſupplications unto him, we ſhall undoubtedly partake of the promiſed rewards.

3. There

(3.) There is this in the covenant, that the promiſer and fulfiller is the ſame. God does not intruſt the fulfilling of his promiſes to any body elſe; we are not to take God's promiſe as a bill, and call upon another man to pay it: no, we are to bring them all to himſelf, he is the fulfiller. What a bleſſed ſaying is that of good Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 15. *What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it?* I got the word from him, and I got the deed from him; the words were the words of his mouth, and the deeds were the work of his hands: *He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it.* Here is a remarkable emphaſis, a ſpiritual eying that this godly man had of the eminent hand in fulfilling his gracious word to him.

Laſtly, The great Mediator of this covenant oliges us to faith mightily. I defy a believer to take a look on Chriſt Jeſus by faith, but in and by that look he will find ground for better believing. Look on him which way you will, ſo it will be found. I will name a few things concerning this, how our faith ſhould be ſtrengthened in the expecting of all good things, according to God's covenant, becauſe of Chriſt's intereſts in it.

[1.] The promiſes are in the hand of Jeſus Chriſt; this covenant is eſtabliſhed in the hand of a Mediator, he gets the promiſes. You think this ſtrange; the promiſe of the forgiveneſs of your ſins, of the ſanctifying of your nature, of the bringing you ſafe to the kingdom of glory, are firſt Chriſt's promiſes; they are made to him for us, and he is firſt intruſted with them; but the covenant is confirmed before of God in Chriſt. The promiſe is made unto the ſame Chriſt perſonal and Chriſt myſtical, the head of the body, as the apoſtle ſaith of it, Gal. iii. 18, 19.

[2.] Our Lord is not only the receiver of the promiſes, but he hath already fulfilled the grand condition of the covenant, the proper ſtrict condition of the covenant, whereupon, without any more, an immediate acceſs

acceſs to all the bleſſings is given to every believer upon his pleading. *When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin*, that is the condition, *he ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied*, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. So that now when you are to believe the promiſes, you are to exerciſe your faith thus: "This promiſe hath "a great bleſſing, that I ſtand greatly in need of; "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath fulfilled the grand con- "dition of the promiſe, and all the bleſſings that are "in the promiſe, are now made over to me in the "laſt will and teſtament of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "confirmed by his blood; that as ſure as Chriſt was "dead and is alive, ſo ſurely is the new teſtament and "all the bleſſings of it confirmed and ſealed already." Our charters for heaven are ſealed by our Lord's blood, we have no ſeal to put to them, but the ſeal of our poor faith.

[3.] Our Lord is miniſtering in the ſanctuary above. If Chriſt were not interceding in heaven, a poor Chriſtian would have a comfortleſs work in believing on earth: but our poor believing and his grand interceſſion, when they chime, if I may ſo ſpeak, make wonderful muſic above. He ſends his Spirit to work in us thoſe deſires after covenant-bleſſings, that he is pleading for in the virtue of his blood, in the higheſt ſanctuary. Let your faith then argue thus: "Jeſus "Chriſt is at the Father's right hand: I am a poor "pleader at the footſtool, but there is a ſtrong pleader "at the King's elbow, if I may ſo ſpeak, in the high- "eſt court, and it is his buſineſs to mind my affairs." How ſtrongly would believers plead, how believingly would they ſend up their broken deſires to heaven, if they did duly know, that all their petitions muſt be ſent up to God through Chriſt, and be perfumed with another kind of incenſe than they can give! So much for this, on what ground believers ſhould expect all good from God by the way.

2. What

2. What are the cases wherein this believing and glorifying God's faithfulness is to be acted? The answer is, In every thing. I shall only name a few particulars, which as they are the great trying of faith, wherein believing is most difficult, so they are triumphs of faith, and believing is most noble, when in these cases.

1*st*, In case of great affliction from the hand of God. That is a case wherein believers are called to expect good from God, when things to sense and reason, and to common observation, seem to go against us; we say such an one is in affliction. They are called evil things sometimes by saints themselves: *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* says patient Job, chap. ii. 10. But believers should learn to name things as God names them, and as the covenant names them; we are to learn to name God's works by his word, and not to name his words by his works. Afflictions are very common, and they are very many; the heads of them are many, the various sorts of them are innumerable: I will only name a few things concerning them, that are commonly most trying to faith, and name them to press believing the more earnestly.

(1.) There is the surprising unexpectedness of affliction, when it comes from a quarter that people did not expect it to come from. The apostle warns Christians as to this: *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you,* 1 Peter iv. 12. It is very observable, that there is hardly a person that is soundly afflicted, that is smartly afflicted, but he apprehends there is something special in his case, which never was in any before. A man that hath a true sight of his sins, thinks they are the greatest that ever were; a man that rightly sees his own mercies, thinks those the most special mercies that ever were; a man that narrowly looks upon his own afflictions, sometimes thinks them so too. Surprising, unexpected,

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unaccountable afflictions, are commonly very trying; and uſually this is in them, that the man thinks them greater than have befallen others. The infinite wiſdom of God can ſhape and frame afflictions; thoſe which ſeem to be common, yet by ſome form, by ſome reaſon, by ſome circumſtances of them, he ſhall make them as ſingular, as if they had never been felt by any; this is a part of the wiſdom of God. Our Lord ſpeaks of a man's taking up his *croſs*. What, does not God give a common croſs to a great many? No; every one hath his own, and the Lord makes it, and ſhapes it, and fits that croſs, which is fitteſt to be laid upon the back of his poor child.

(2.) There is an oppreſſing affliction that is a great trial, that ſeems to threaten all things, and to cut down the very root of all. A poor creature expects that the tree will be cut down from the very root of it, and that it will be quite plucked up. Lopping off the branches is not ſo formidable: *I am oppreſſed*, ſays Hezekiah, *Lord, undertake for me.* Sometimes a dark and dumb affliction is a very great trial of faith, and a great many of the children of God meet with ſuch. Says the poor creature, I have had ſuch an affliction a long while upon me, and I have many times laid my ear to it, to hear what it ſays, and there is no voice, if I may ſo ſpeak. If you cannot hear the rod's voice, pray hear God's voice in the word. Sometimes the rod cries aloud, and ſpeaks God's mind in the word; ſometimes we muſt bring the word to the rod, and ſee if we can put the rod upon the rack, and make it ſpeak what God means thereby. Now, in all theſe caſes, in any ſort of affliction, let it be ſurpriſing and ſtrange, let it be oppreſſive, let it be dark, let it be dumb and ſpeak nothing, believers muſt believe ſtill.

[1.] Believe that whatever changes there are in God's way to you, there is none in his heart. The Lord hath changed his countenance, the Lord hath changed

changed his countenance, the Lord hath changed his hand, only his heart remains unchangeable, still that is to be firmly believed: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* People commonly think as soon as Christ begins to rebuke and chasten, he begins to cease to love; but our Lord says just the contrary, Rev. iii. 19. See also Prov. xxvii. 6. Psal. cxix. 75.

[2.] Believe this firmly, that God's wisdom is never puzzled or nonplussed, though you be. The Lord knows his matters, and he will not give you an account of them; but we are to believe he knows what he does, and he has a wise end before him. Christians do commonly imagine they are so wise, that if there were any possible good, that could be the fruit of such a dispensation, they could perceive it, but, after all their studying, they cannot find what good this can turn to. *If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days,* saith the Lord, *should it also be marvellous in mine eyes?* Zech. viii. 6. A severe rebuke given to an unbelieving people. *Quest.* Do you think God's eyes are no better than yours?

[3.] In all the trials of your faith by affliction, believe this, that God's eye is on you, when you cannot see him: *Behold,* says Job, *I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,* Job xxiii. 8, 9. I take it, says he, when I am tried, I shall come forth as gold.

Lastly, In all your afflictions believe a safe issue, that you shall get well out of all: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all,* Psalm xxxiv. 19. *These are they which come out of great tribulation,* says the angel to John, Rev. vii. 14. There is no affliction can enter heaven, but I believe the best talking of affliction that ever was, is in heaven. All the glorified in heaven understand better all God's way with them. They were

many of them plagued every morning, and chaſtened every moment; their ſouls were filled with bitterneſs and ſorrow all their life long; yet there is never a one there, but ſees that every thing was well done, there was nothing that they could have been without; their guide guided them well, and there is nothing amiſs, nothing crooked in all God's way. It is with reſpect to this, that the apoſtle calls to believers, to *rejoice*, though in the midſt of *manifold temptations*; why ſo? knowing that the *trial of your faith* ſhall turn to *praiſe*, 1 Peter i. 6, 7. *Ye are in heavineſs, through manifold temptations*, that is, as to the things of ſenſe; but, ſays the apoſtle, *ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable*, as Chriſtians; and wherefore rejoice in the midſt of heavineſs? Becauſe your faith, though much exerciſed now, will make a glorious appearance at the laſt day. One of the greateſt praiſes that can be given to the Lord by his people, is, that their faith glorified his faithfulneſs, whilſt on earth, in the midſt of their greateſt diſtreſs.

2*dly*, People ſhould act their faith on God's faithfulneſs in caſe of deſertion, when our Lord hides himſelf. Our Lord Jeſus went before us as a pattern in this, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* To put a *my* to a forſaking God, is brave believing. Our Lord's caſe, I know, is altogether ſingular, but many believers have had ſome meaſure of his Spirit in uſing that word in their own caſe. When a man *walks in darkneſs, and has no light*, what ſhall he do then? *Let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God*, Iſa. l. 10. If a man forbear truſting in the Lord, till darkneſs be ſcattered, and light come, and if he ſays it is time enough for me to believe, when God lights the candle; no, ſays the Spirit of God, *When he walks in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him then truſt in the name of the Lord.*

3*dly*, In the caſe of temptation, (I name theſe things which are ſo common, that, in truth, believers lives are ſpent about them), temptation from Satan.

Sirs,

Sirs, if Chriſtians were wiſe, they would learn, if I may ſo ſpeak, of the devil; the more the Lord loves us, the more the devil hates us; and the more the devil hates us, the more we ſhould love the Lord. As ſoon as a Chriſtian gets faith, the devil falls upon him; and when the devil falls upon him, he ſhould believe the more. The time was, ſaith a believer, when he let me alone; what makes this great change, that he is turned to a roaring lion? It is becauſe I left his camp, and turned to another maſter. Faith is eſpecially to be acted in temptation, and victory over temptation is by faith. When our Lord ſaid to Peter, *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat;* our Lord adds, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;* and if thy faith do not fail, the devil will get the worſt of the bargain, Luke xxii. 32. The apoſtle puts a ſpecial mark upon this piece of the Chriſtian armour: *Above all,* ſays he, *taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,* Eph. vi. 16. That *above all* does not only point forth the eminent uſe of faith, in the warfare of faith, but it ſeems to ſet forth the excellency of a Chriſtian's armour in this matter. When Satan and a poor Chriſtian engage together, the devil would firſt have the ſhield of faith laid down, and then he would be too hard for any of the children of God, for commonly one temptation comes not alone. Now thou art put upon examining and trying whether thou haſt any faith. Queſtion all, doubt all, ſays the devil, and let us argue upon the point. But if you enter with the devil upon theſe terms, he will certainly be too hard for you; lay down the concluſion of faith firmly, and tell the devil, I have intruſted my ſoul with Chriſt Jeſus, what haſt thou to ſay to that? will he fail me or no? If thou ſpeakeſt any evil of my Lord, thou ſpeakeſt like the devil, and I do not regard thee; but if thou ſpeak evil of me, I will believe thee, and can ſpeak of it myſelf, and tell it to

my Lord, Pſal. xlii. 5, 6. The queſtion that we are to propoſe in the warfare of faith with the devil, is, Is God true or no? If he be true in his promiſes, I will believe them, and believe none that contradict them, and in all my adverſities will I take *the ſhield of faith.* See Eph. vi. 18. and Pſalm xci. 4.

4thly, In the caſe of manifold delays and diſappointments, as to the performance of pleaded promiſes; in this caſe, I ſay, you are ſtill to believe. If though you have taken the promiſe, though you have believed it, though you have prayed upon it, though you have been looking out and waiting for the fulfilment of it, ſtill delays come in the way, believe ſtill. The Lord in his wiſdom has reſerved times and ſeaſons for our mercies, and for his fulfilling his word, all to himſelf. He hath told his people what he will do for them, but he hath not told them when. Tho' he made a great promiſe to Abraham, yet he did not tell him when he would perform it; that great believer muſt wait twenty-five years from the promiſe, till the performance came, yet no doubt he believed the promiſe every day.

5thly, In caſes of challenges of conſcience for ſin. Believers muſt learn to exerciſe their faith upon this faithfulneſs of God, in the view and in the face of challenges of conſcience for ſin. *Iniquities prevail againſt me*, ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſalm lxv. 3. What could a man ſay after this? What could you expect ſhould be the next word? Muſt it not be, And therefore wrath ſhall come upon me? No ſuch thing: *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away. If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand? But there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayſt be feared*, Pſalm cxxx. 3, 4. Our conſciences are ſometimes diſturbed with challenges for old ſins long ſince committed, which, according to a ſimilitude that a holy ſaint of God gives us in his letters, *like the ghoſt of a dead friend, continually haunt us.* An old

old ſubdued, pardoned ſin, may fright one terribly; we have great need, if I may ſo ſpeak, of ſtrong faith, to converſe without fear with this ghoſt, the ghoſt of an old tranſgreſſion. A ſin that is twenty years old may appear as formidable as the devil himſelf; but if we do not learn to believe and maintain confidence of faith, notwithſtanding challenges for ſin, who can believe at all?

Laſtly, In caſe of God's calling us unto any ſpecial piece of ſervice, ſome ſpecial piece of hard, ſingular work, that we were never called to before; in this caſe faith is to be exerciſed, for help in time of need ſhall be given us; if the ſervice be required of you, the aſſiſtance for it ſhall be given to you; really the faith of Chriſtians is tried greatly with the change of work that God puts in their hands, they think they have ſome tolerable meaſure of faith for their daily and uſual work; but if God call them to that they never acted before, to ſome new ſingular piece of work, then believing is ſpecially called for to help out in this time of need; as we are to crave help in all times of need, ſo we are to crave ſpecial help in times of ſpecial need; I named theſe ſix, as being thoſe in which the life of Chriſtians is mainly ſpent, take away the Chriſtian's afflictions and deſertions, his temptations, challenges of conſcience, delays in promiſes, and ſpecial turns of God's hand towards him, and pray what is left in a Chriſtian's life, that is ſo difficult? And ſince our life is ſpent about theſe things, we muſt live by faith, we are to exerciſe faith in and about all theſe things, that our life is mainly ſpent in; how bleſſed a thing is it for a believer to go on towards heaven, and in every ſtep of the way to be able to ſay, Though God hath changed my way towards me many times, though he hath brought me into many by-paths, yet bleſſed be his name, there was never a path I was in, but I believed in him, and if it were an evil one, I hoped to be delivered out of it, but if a good one, I believed

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it would advance me towards heaven, I believed and praiſed; and in every one I believed it would turn to my ſalvation. I knew they would bring me nearer to God, that they would at laſt bring me to heaven, where I hope eternally to bleſs him for them.

SERMON XI.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promiſed.

FROM theſe words I have ſpoke unto three doctrines, and they having been again and again repeated unto you, you may eaſily remember them; 1. *That the Chriſtian's God is a promiſing God.* 2. *That this promiſing God is faithful in all his promiſes. And* 3. *that the faith of believers ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſes.* I referred the main application of the whole doctrine unto this laſt head, in laying the duty before you, that this truth does exact, and crave of you. I named three things, wherein our faith ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, and have already ſpoke unto two of them.

The firſt was, That our faith ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, in the grand general promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus: this is that faith that the word calls ſo much for, it calls for it from unbelievers, and this call is God's appointed means for working the faith that it calls for; *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;* the word of God tells us what we ſhould believe, and the word of God, in the name of God, commands us to believe what God ſays: this I did inſiſt ſometime upon. I know there

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are ſome who think it needleſs to preſs people to believe, and to put forth faith; at firſt a great many poor creatures think it an eaſy thing to believe, whereas it is a hard matter to awaken the conſcience; but when the conſcience is awakened, they think it an eaſy matter to believe, but they only think ſo, that never knew what an awakened conſcience was; let a poor ſinner ſee nothing before him but hell, and nothing within him but what deſerves hell, it is only the wonderfull power of God, that can make this ſinner truſt Chriſt upon a bare word for his eternal ſalvation; believing and truſting the ſoul on Chriſt Jeſus is found a mighty difficulty by all them, that are concerned about their ſalvation; ſome think this anſwering of God's promiſe in the goſpel improper to be laid before ſinners at firſt; theſe people imagine, that there is ſomething that ſinners ſhould be called to before believing, but as long as theſe two principles of truth remain, and remain they will, as long as the world laſts, this is always a vain objection. *Firſt*, That no man can do any good, nor get any good, but in and from Chriſt Jeſus. *Secondly*, That no man can do any good with Chriſt, nor get any good from him, but in the way of believing; and if ſo, will our Lord give his help to them that will not give truſt to him?

The *ſecond* thing I was laſt day exhorting you to, was this, To anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in believing for all covenant-bleſſings by the way. This is properly the life of faith, and a great work this is to believe, as large as the whole covenant: to believe as firmly, as the promiſes are firm; to believe as long as until the promiſes turn to performances, how much of divine power is needful for this work! Juſtly does the apoſtle call the work of faith *a work of faith with power*, 2 Theſſ. i. 11.; in which not only power is put forth by the creature that acts it, but there is power put forth by God to draw it forth, and to keep it up. Of this I ſpoke laſt day.

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The *third* exhortation that remains to be handled, and that I ſhall inſiſt on, if the Lord will, a little more, is, That believers ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe of eternal life, by believing the *prize* and *hope of our calling*, as the apoſtle calls it. The Spirit of God calls this eternal life, *the promiſe*, as if all were contained in it; 1 John ii. 25. *And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life.* Faith in this caſe that I am to ſpeak of, is faith which *entereth into that within the veil*, as the apoſtle ſaith of *hope*, Heb. vi. 19. I am now to direct this exhortation unto them that have ſome confidence and good conſcience towards God; that have in ſome meaſure regarded the former and performed it, and that deſire more and more to be in it; ſuch as have intruſted their ſouls by faith in Chriſt's hand, upon the warrant of the promiſe of the goſpel; ſuch as are exerciſed in living by faith upon the promiſes of the new covenant; it is upon them that I lay this burden, and a ſweet one it is; that you ſhould believe eternal life. The apoſtle John, chap. v. 13. ſpeaks ſomething to the ſame purpoſe: *Theſe things have I written unto you* (ſays he) *that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* The apoſtle's meaning certainly was not, to perſuade them to believe that they were in heaven, for he and they both knew the contrary ſufficiently; but he calls them to believe that they had eternal life, that they had already a hold of it by faith; that they had it in the root by Chriſt's dwelling in their hearts by faith; that they had it in the foundation of it, by their believing the record that God gave of his Son; as is plain from the context.

In proſecuting of this exhortation, there are three things that I ſhall have ſome reſpect unto, and handle.

1. What is to be believed, or how it is that a Chriſtian in the way of duty muſt anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, in the promiſe of eternal life.

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2. What are the difficulties that lie in a Christian's way, which make this believing so rare and so hard.

3. What the grounds of this faith are, that believers should improve, and in the improving of them triumph over all the difficulties that are in the way.

First, What it is believers are to believe, when they are called to believe eternal life. I take it, as you may perceive, strictly, as contradistinguished from all the covenant-blessings that believers have a right to in this life, and have a begun possession of, that they should live by that faith, of which I spake in the former part. But I shall now respect only *the prize of our high calling*, *the mark* that God has set before us to run towards, to chear ourselves with the faith of it before we come at it. And surely the speaking and hearing of heaven should be a pleasing subject unto all them that have any hope to be in it; the speaking of it is sometimes blessed by the Lord to make them mind it, that never thought of it before. The sum of it is in these four particulars,

1. In the way of duty, in answering the faithfulness of God, believers should believe this, that as soon as the soul departs from the body, it is immediately received by Christ. A believer is to honour God's faithfulness in believing this, that as soon as the soul and body are parted by death, the soul is immediately with the Lord. This the Spirit of God, by Paul's pen, teaches us, in two places, very fully, 2 Cor. v. 1,----8. and Phil. i. 23. In the former the apostle expressly asserts this doctrine: *For we know*, says he, *that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. ----We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* By how many words does the apostle expressly teach us that the state of absence from the body to a believer, is immediately attended with a state of presence

with the Lord! And in Phil. i. 23. he ſays, *For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt. Departing* and *being with Chriſt*, are joined together, as inſeparable. As ſoon as Paul is gone out of this world, he is with Chriſt. Our Lord gave a very great promiſe to the believing thief, for he was then a great believer, though once as great a thief, Luke xxiii. 42. *To-day*, ſays he, *ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* "Thou art dying, thou "art drawing near to thy end, as I am, but this day "thou and I ſhall be together in a better ſtate."

2. Believers muſt believe, and glorify God's faithfulneſs in believing, that the bodies they leave ſhall be raiſed up again glorious bodies, at the appearing of Chriſt. This is as plain as any thing can be expreſſed to be in the word, that the body the believer leaves, as it were, in the duſt, which death hath dominion over, which rottenneſs and corruption triumph over, the ſame body ſhall live again, and be raiſed by his mighty power: *Knowing that he which raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent us with you*, 2 Cor. iv. 14. *For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. See alſo 1 Cor. xv. 58. This faith Job acted, and it is one of the ſingular expreſſions of a new teſtament faith in the old teſtament times: *For I know* (ſays he, chap. xix. 25, 26.) *that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God.* A great part of the meaning of which is; Job had, by this loathſome diſeaſe that was ſent upon him, in a manner death beginning to prey upon him; now, ſays the good man, though worms ſhould go on, and after they have deſtroyed my ſkin, they ſhould deſtroy my fleſh alſo, yet in *my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me*, verſe 27. The faith of the reſur-

resurrection of the dead, though plainly revealed in the word, is not a matter so easily attained, there needs a great deal of faith to believe it firmly. How quietly, how patiently, how cheerfully would believers look upon death seizing them, and coming in upon them, either gradually by age and the infirmities of it, or more violently and speedily by sickness and diseases; how quietly would they look upon the tumbling down of this earthly tabernacle, if they believed this firmly? *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:* what will he do when he comes? Here is one thing, says the apostle, he will do, he will *change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,* Phil. iii. 20, 21. The faith of the resurrection of the dead can never stand, but upon the prop of divine omnipotency. It is founded upon this, That he has said it that can do every thing. Thereupon when our Lord checks the Sadducees for their infidelity, he saith, *Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God,* Matth. xxii. 29. If you understood the scriptures spiritually, you would not have asked such a question in derision of the resurrection; if you knew the power of God, you would firmly believe that God can perform it. Our Lord tries Martha with this, John xi. 25, 26. *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?* Our Lord, in the questioning of it, hints the difficulty that was in it, and some backwardness unto this believing that he perceived in the good woman. See also Luke xx. 33, 36.

3. That the departed soul and the raised body shall be eternally united together. This is a part of that faith that we owe to the faithfulness of God in the promise of eternal life, that not only the body shall

be raiſed, but that our ſpirit ſhall again, by the mighty power of God, take poſſeſſion of theſe ſame bodies. It is the ſame body the apoſtle ſtill ſpeaks of, when he ſaith, *It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power; it is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body*, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44, &c.

4. That this united ſoul and body ſhall be unſpeakably bleſſed in the higheſt heavens with that that is called the reward of eternal life. This, I ſay, is the ſum of what we are called to believe, and is the duty of every believer to believe, in anſwering the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe that he hath promiſed; that when he ſees good we ſhall live here no longer, he will immediately receive our departing ſouls; *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit;* that when his appointed time comes, when the morning comes, he will alſo in power and mercy viſit our rottenneſs and duſt in the grave, and raiſe up a glorious tabernacle, and unite the ſoul therewith, and bleſs both body and ſoul, the whole man, in the enjoyment of himſelf. Theſe are the common plain truths that are in this promiſe of eternal life: but this I would not leave thus; therefore we will take a little farther notice of this great bleſſing, according to what we gather of it from the word; for whoever they be that are called to the exerciſe of faith, they had need diſtinctly to know what it is they are to believe for, as well as what is the ground to believe upon. We find this great prize of our calling ſpoken of to us in the word three ways, and I would handle it a little in all theſe three reſpects.

1ſt, It is ſpoken of *Negatively*, by removing all the known evils from that ſtate, that we know to be evils in this ſtate; this is a way I ſay, whereby the Lord helps our weak ſhallow apprehenſions about the prize of eternal life, that it is a ſtate ſeparate from, and altogether above all the miſeries, calamities, and evils

vils that are afflicting and diſturbing in the preſent ſtate. So we find in Rev. xxi. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away.* Sorrow and cauſe of ſorrow are ſo inſeparable from the ſtate we live in, that in a manner we do not know how to live without them, nor to think of our life, as ſeparate from them; we all know how natural it is for people to frame apprehenſions of a happy ſtate, by removing of miſeries from their thoughts and deſires: Now take all the heaps of miſeries you know, and concerning theſe you may ſay, none of theſe things are there, there is no ſin, there is no ſorrow, there is no ſickneſs, there is no diſturbance without nor within, there is nothing at all of thoſe things, that we are now daily exerciſed with and bewail before God and men; now this negative notion of it leads no further than we can diſtinctly know. We know what an evil theſe things are, but we do not know what a great happineſs it is to be quite rid of them all, we know what a trouble pain is, and what a bleſſing eaſe is, what a trouble there is in ſickneſs, what a comfort in health, what trouble there is in croſſes, loſſes, diſturbances, in this world, we know a little of the miſery of them, and the happineſs of being rid of them, but we cannot conceive a right notion of that ſtate, wherein all things that are evil ſhall be quite removed; therefore you may find all along the believer's faith goes beyond his knowledge in the believing of eternal life. We believe what we cannot fully know, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *But as it is written, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* It is but a ſmall portion thereof, that we come to attain the knowledge of.

2dly, This prize of our calling is known *comparatively*, by comparing it with other things. We know

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it a little negatively, by removing all the evil from it we know. We know it comparatively, when we prefer it to all the good we know: now there are three things which bear the name of good, and ſome of them undeſervedly, that it is to be compared with, and greatly preferred above.

(1) The firſt is the portion of the men of this world. This eternal life that we believe is a great deal bigger, higher and better than that. *Lord, deliver me*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *from the men of the world, which have their portion in this life.* As for me, ſays he, I expect better things than this world can afford, Pſalm xvii. 14, 15. The portion of the men of this world is ſuch a prize, that the greateſt part of the world run after it all their life long. What pain, what care, what thoughts are ſpent about theſe things? And when they have got them, what have they got? How poor and empty are they? The believer's portion even in this life is a great deal better than that of the wicked. Better is that little the righteous man hath, than many revenues of the wicked; how much more muſt the prize of the high calling be? We would not, as it were, diſgrace our prize ſo much as to compare it with the portion of the men of the world; and yet what a believer hath in time is beyond what they have.

(2.) We compare this with the ſpiritual allowance of believers in this life. There is a gracious allowance of ſpiritual bleſſings given to believers in this life. We are to compare this with what remains, and to prefer our expectations to our poſſeſſions; there is ſomething of the earneſt of the inheritance given now, Eph. i. 14, 15. There is ſomething of communion with Chriſt, now that fills the heart *with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. And what is that now to what remains? There have been believers that have had heaven upon earth in this world, but when they came to enjoy heaven in heaven, they doubtleſs found a vaſt difference. *At that day*, ſays our Lord,

Lord, *ye ſhall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* You ſhall know it in a better manner, than now you can imagine; all the enjoyments that God affords unto his people here, are all helps whereby believers may come to know and gueſs better what heaven is; they ſhould not ſay it is good to be here becauſe of theſe, but he is good that gives that good here, and there are better things prepared that we ſhould deſire more fervently; all ſpiritual enjoyments that are given in time are for the ſharpening the believers appetite, and raiſing their ſpirits in deſire of heaven the more fervently.

(3.) We are to compare the prize of our calling, with the deſire and longing of believers; our deſires are larger than our poſſeſſions. There is never a believer but knows this in experience, that he can deſire a great deal more than he can hold. The reward of eternal life goes beyond our deſires. The Lord works in us, and *does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*, Eph. iii. 20. What uſe ſhould a man make of this name of God? Think as as much as you can, and aſk as much as you can, and in the faith of that aſking, and in the faith joined to that thinking, expect ſome bleſſing that is beyond both, beyond both our aſking, and our thinking: This is a ſecond conſideration, whereby we come to know what the prize of the high calling of God is, that we are called to believe, by comparing it either with the poor portion of the men of this world, or the ſpiritual allowance of believers, or the extended deſire of Chriſtians.

3*dly*, The word of God ſpeaks *poſitively* of it, and we are to learn ſomething of it this way; but as poſitive as the ſpirit of God is in ſpeaking of it, we are ſtill very ſhort of being able to apprehend it, there is a great deal more ſpoken of heaven in the word, than any ſaint out of heaven can ever underſtand; may I ſo ſpeak, we ſhall underſtand the Bible a great deal better when we come to heaven, eſpecially that part

part of it that ſpeaks of heaven; the bleſſing of eternal life, the greatneſs, the ſweetneſs, the vaſtneſs of it, is beſt known by enjoying of it. Of the poſitive account that we have in the word, concerning the ſtate of believers in eternal life, I would give you ſome hints from the word of God, in theſe ſix or ſeven things.

(1.) There is a glorious appearing and manifeſtation of Jeſus Chriſt ſpoken of; from him grace begins, by him grace is carried on, with him glory begins, and continues for ever; it is called the *bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. ii. 13. The appearance, I ſay, of Jeſus Chriſt in his higheſt glory. All the appearances that Chriſt hath made have been ſome way under a vail, and under ſome eclipſe, therefore is it that he is ſo deſpiſed. In the firſt appearance that Chriſt made in the fleſh, what a thick vail of infirmity was upon it? *The Word was made fleſh*, ſays the Holy Ghoſt, *and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. Every one could not do ſo, he was made fleſh, this is called an appearance of Chriſt, he hath *brought life and immortality to light* by this appearance of his, 2 Tim. i. 1. Chriſt makes an appearance unto his choſen firſt in calling them, afterwards in viſiting of them; when he firſt comes to call a poor creature, this appearance of Jeſus Chriſt is under a vail, ſtill it is Chriſt in the word, Chriſt under the vail of ordinances, Chriſt in the means; many times he is not known, when he does appear. Many poor ſinners Chriſt hath appeared to in his working upon them, and he hath carried on his work a good while before they knew who it was that worked upon them; his appearing afterwards to his people in love-viſits, is more ſenſible, but far ſhort of this; *I will manifeſt myſelf to him*, John xiv. 21, 23. There are ſome appearances and manifeſtations of Chriſt unto the ſouls of his people,

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not wherein they ſee any thing with their bodily eyes, or hear any voice with their bodily ears; but in and under the form of prayer, the means of his appointment, there is a gracious diſplay of all the glory that paſſes like a beam upon their ſouls, that they can ſay, this is the Lord, this is Chriſt, this is he I have waited for; the ſtate of eternal life is incomparably beyond all this; there is a glorious appearance of Chriſt: The word ſpeaks of it ſo, as if Chriſt had never appeared before; Col. iii. 4. *When Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory*, 1 John iii. 2. *We know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

(2.) The word ſpeaks of this bleſſed ſtate, that is the hope of our calling, under the notion of a full viſion of him, or of ſeeing him; he not only appears in his glory, but that glory is ſeen by his people; thence ſprings their happineſs. Our Lord Chriſt knew beſt what heaven was; it is beſt learning what it is by ſpeaking of it. See how he prays, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo, whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* Obſerve Chriſt there plainly ſhews us, what is his great deſign in deſiring to have all his people with him, and what way it is he intends to make them bleſſed, by beholding the glory the father hath given him. Now when we are living in this body, and are compaſſed about with frailty without, and ſin within, any ſingular appearance of his glory is diſturbing and dreadful to us; may I ſpeak ſuch a word, and you underſtand it rightly, there is never a believer ſo comfortable, but Jeſus Chriſt could render that perſon a very miſerable creature, by a diſplay of his glory; ſaints may deſire more now than they are able to take in. *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy glory*, ſaith Moſes, but the Lord anſwers him, *Thou canſt not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee me, and live*, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 20. Obſerve the

viſion that the Prophet Iſaiah had, was a ſight of Chriſt, and was a ſight of his glory too, Iſa. vi. 1, 5. commented upon by the Holy Ghoſt, John xii. 41. *Theſe things*, ſaid Eſaias, *when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.* Now ſurely you would think, that when there is a diſcovery made of the glory of Chriſt unto ſuch a man as Iſaiah, ſo long before, that there ſhould be a very great contentment therewith; why Abraham ſaw Chriſt's day afar off and was glad, Abraham's heart was cheared by believing Chriſt's day, and ſeeing his glory afar off. But when this glory ſhone, if I may ſo ſpeak, in thoſe beams that mortal eyes were not able to receive, Iſaiah ſaith, *Wo is me, for I am undone,-------for mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.* Here is a ſight not fit for a ſinner to bear, the frailty I ſay of our fleſh with the remaining corruption that is in our natures, makes that the full viſions of the glory of Chriſt are very unfit for us, and we for them; but this is the ſtate promiſed unto us in the goſpel, *When he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. What have we never ſeen Chriſt as he is, before? No, ye only ſee him in the glaſs of the goſpel; ye only ſee him under that vail, and in that ſhadow that is fitted for our preſent ſtate; hence it comes to paſs, that it is ſaid concerning believers in this day, *That Chriſt ſhall be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe*, 2 Theſſ. i. 10.

(3) In this ſtate there is full conformity to a ſeen Chriſt; Chriſt in his glory is fully ſeen by the glorified eye, and perfect conformity to him reſulteth therefrom. For according to the meaſures of clearneſs with which we ſee Chriſt by faith, are the meaſures of our conformity to him now, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Pray obſerve, the gradual progreſs of ſanctification in a renewed man; it is carried on by the viſions of Chriſt

Chriſt by faith now; the more clearly the eye of faith takes up Chriſt, the more ſtrong and abiding impreſſions of likeneſs are upon the ſoul. But what perfect conformity to him is, we cannot yet conceive. If I may offer ſuch a ſimilitude, we are ſuch dunghills, ſo dark, that when the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhines upon us, there is but a little beam left, juſt enough to teſtify that the ſun hath ſhone upon us; but the ſtate of glory will render a believer both in ſoul and body like a cryſtal wall, that will reflect the image of the Sun of righteouſneſs moſt purely and reſplendently. The ſtate of happineſs and eternal life conſiſts in being like Chriſt: *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is;* the conformity is carried on by that ſeeing: *I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake, with thy likeneſs*, Pſalm xvii. 15.

(4) There is a ſtate of conſtant ſerving him ſpoken of, a ſtate of unwearied delightful ſerving of Jeſus Chriſt. Heaven would not be heaven to a heavenly mind, if there were no ſervice to Chriſt in it. It is ſtrange to ſee how the apoſtle values ſervice to Chriſt on earth ſo highly, that he lays it in the balance with the enjoyment of Chriſt in heaven, and he cannot tell well which to chuſe: *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*, (ſays he), *having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better: Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh, is more needful for you.* It is natural, I ſay, to a ſaint to love ſervice. It is promiſed, that *they ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads.----His ſervants ſhall ſerve him*, Rev. xxi. 3, 4. See alſo chap iv. 10. Little we can do for Chriſt and his glory while we are here, and we ſhould be deeply humbled that we can do ſo little. Chriſtians, lay firm hold upon eternal life by ſtrong faith. You ſhall bring more glory to Chriſt the firſt half-hour in heaven, than ever you did, if you lived fourſcore years, in believing, and praying, and wreſtling here on earth. There is pure ſinleſs ſerving

that is tendered with delight, and received accordingly.

(5.) There is inexpreſſible ſatisfaction and contentment in this bleſſed ſtate. It is properly called happineſs. Whatever there be of goodneſs, the reliſh of that goodneſs ſtands in the ſoul's contentment: John xvi. 22. *And ye now therefore have ſorrow*, ſays our Lord, when about to depart, to his diſciples: *but I*, ſays he, *will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Your heart ſhall rejoice.* A heart full of joy is not to be expected by believers till this great day come; but then the heart ſhall be ſo full of joy, that there ſhall be no room for any thing elſe. I know there are ſome ſudden floods of joy that the Lord gives even here, and ſuch as there ſeems to be no room left for any thing elſe; but though this joy fill the whole heart, yet ſtay a little while, and the flood will dry, the flood will grow ſmaller and ſmaller, and the old darkneſs will enter again. This joy will be taken away one way, or other; but in the ſtate above, our joy ſhall have no end.

Laſtly, To complete all, there is eternity in this bleſſedneſs. *Ever* and *ever* are the main things in heaven and hell. Take eternity out of heaven, it would turn heaven into an hell; take eternity out of hell, and it would turn hell into a heaven. Eternity is the joy of heaven, and the torment of hell. Poor Peter was little time in heaven, as he thought: *Lord*, ſays he, *it is good to be here.* But all that are got up yonder may ſay rightly, *It is good to be here, and good to be eternally here*, to be ever with the Lord. The greater any bleſſedneſs be, it is greatly inhanced by its laſting; the greater any miſery be, it is greatly aggravated by its continuance. Where the greateſt good comes to be enjoyed with the longeſt duration, even eternity, what inexpreſſible joy is there! But where the greateſt miſery is to be inflicted unto eternity, what vaſt heightening is it of the miſery! So much

much now shall serve for the first thing, what it is that we are to believe, when we are called to glorify God's faithfulness in believing the prize of our calling, that after we have given glory to God by believing for all the good things by the way, we may glorify him, by believing the good home he hath prepared for us.

APPLICATION.

I ask you in the first place, Do you believe that there is such a hope of this calling? Christianity is a despised thing. Christians are a despised people, because the prize is unknown to the despisers. Do you believe firmly, I say, that there is such a state, and that all that are departed in the Lord are blessed, because they are entered upon the enjoyment of it; and that all that believe on him, shall certainly enjoy it in his good time? I would reckon, that that man were fairly setting out for heaven, who firmly believes that there is one, and hath his heart filled with a sense of it, as a great invaluable blessing above all that time can talk of.

2. Must not an interest in this prize of our calling be well worthy the having, and the knowledge of it well worthy the seeking? Are heaven and hell so small things, and these different states so like one another, that people should be unconcerned which of them be their lot? Indeed the greatest part of people live, as if they had laid down this conclusion, I care not whether I come to heaven or hell.

3. Should not Jesus Christ our Lord be very precious to us? Whenever we think of the prize of our calling, we must always remember Christ, and our debt to him; he bought this prize by his blood; heaven is a fruit of the prize of Christ's blood, heaven is a palace built upon the foundation of the blood of the Son of God; he hath bought it by his blood, and he offers it freely to us by his grace: Whoever

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accepts his offer, he takes them and leads them kindly by the hand; he *brings many ſons unto glory*, Heb. ii. 10. and at laſt, when he hath brought them through all, he himſelf puts the crown on with his own hands: *Looking*, ſays the apoſtle, *for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal life.* Ye have got a deal of mercy from him before, but the grand gift of mercy will be, when the believer ſhall kneel at Chriſt's feet, and receive the crown of glory at his hands. It is impoſſible that a man can have right thoughts of heaven that has not right thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt; and it is impoſſible that a man can have right thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt, but his heart will be filled with heaven.

SERMON XII.

HEBREWS x. 23.

For he is faithful that promiſed.

THOUGH you have heard theſe words but once, if you be true Chriſtians, you would never forget them; how much more ſhould they be well remembered when they have been ſo often repeated, and ſo long ſpoken to. That which remains now is a part of the application of the truths propoſed from theſe words. I did propoſe three exhortations in the concluſion of the application of this doctrine.

1. That you ſhould anſwer the faithfulneſs of God, by believing the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus. This is the firſt act of faith that God craves of all them to whom the goſpel is preached. Where-ever the apoſtles came with the glad tidings of ſalvation by Chriſt

Chriſt Jeſus, their application was to all, *Believe;* believe this doctrine with the heart, and ye ſhall be ſaved.

2. I was calling believers unto the anſwering of God's faithfulneſs, by truſting him for all covenant-bleſſings by the way. And,

3. By anſwering God's faithfulneſs by faith, as to the end, eternal life, the great hope of our calling; *the hope of eternal life*, as the apoſtle Paul calls it, *which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began*, Titus i. 1, 2. In the handling this exhortation, there were three heads I propoſed to ſpeak to.

Firſt, What is to be believed, when a believer is called to believe eternal life promiſed to him in the goſpel; and this I ſpent the laſt time in diſcourſing to. Believers are called to believe, that as ſoon as the ſoul is diſlodged from the body, it is preſent with the Lord. They are to believe, that the ſame body that is laid in the grave and rots there, ſhall be raiſed again in glory, at the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt. They are to believe that this departed ſoul, and this body raiſed again ſhall be eternally united, never to part more. *Laſtly*, That in this ſtate of perfection, we ſhall be eternally bleſſed in the enjoyment of God in Chriſt Jeſus above. Of the particulars of which I diſcourſed the laſt day.

The *ſecond* that now remains to be ſpoke to, is about the difficulty of believing this. Shall I prove that it is difficult? Is there not proof enough, that this faith is ſo very rare? It may be, you may think it an unreaſonable ſurmiſe and jealouſy, but let every one's conſcience anſwer for themſelves. It may be (I do not know that it is) that, in all this aſſembly, there is not one perſon that can tell when they ſpent a calm ſweet hour in the hope of the glory of God, when they had a ſatisfying rejoicing in the hope of this great prize of our calling. If this be rare, ſurely the faith of it is rare; for it is impoſſible that the

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faith of the glory to come can be ſtrong in the heart, but joy will ſpring up therefrom: *By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,* Romans v. 2. Chriſtians know this well enough, that when they have tried their faith upon a great many promiſes of the word, ſometimes upon the promiſe of God, hearing prayer, that their faith does pretty well there; ſometimes upon the promiſes of pardon of ſin through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and their faith anſwers: but bring them cloſe to believing the prize and crown of glory, there frequently their faith fails them, they cannot draw it forth ſo confidently as they would. That it is difficult and rare, I take for granted, and ſhall not ſpend time to prove that which almoſt every exerciſed conſcience in the company has a witneſs within to the truth of. My work then ſhall be to ſhew you, whence it comes that believing of eternal life is ſo very hard to be got, and is ſo rarely found with Chriſtians.

1. Becauſe this great thing, *eternal life,* is greatly unknown to us. *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be,* ſays the apoſtle, 1 John iii. 2.----*Neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,* 1 Cor. ii. 9. Now, it is true the apoſtle ſays, that it is *made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, thro' the goſpel,* 2 Tim. i. 10. Yet tho' it be made manifeſt, we are rather told that it is, than what it is. This glory to come is yet *within the veil,* as the apoſtle ſaith of it, Heb. vi. 19. where Chriſt is, *whither the forerunner is for us entered.* There is an expreſs alluſion to the typical high prieſt, who, when he had offered the blood of atonement upon the altar, carried that blood within the veil to the mercy-ſeat; then he was quite out of the ſight of the people, for he muſt go in alone, and none elſe could look after him. Now,

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how easy is it to conceive this, that the darker the thing believed be to us, the harder believing is? Mercies that we cannot well tell how to conceive of, is it any wonder, we cannot tell how to believe them firmly? For believing has an expectation of a blessing, as well as it has in it a trusting in the truth of the promiser. Heaven to every believer is more strange, than Canaan was to Abraham, who by faith, when he was called of God, went into that place, *and he went out, not knowing whither he went;* he was called to go to a land which he never saw before; only the difference is great in this, that though it was a better spot of the earth, than that where he was born or dwelt, yet it was a spot of the same earth, but heaven is a quite different country, Heb. xi. 8.

2. The vast greatness and goodness of this prize, makes some difficulty to the faith of the people of God. It is so great, so good, that they find it hard to believe the expressions thereof in the word, which are great and many. The hearts of believers are many times so taken with them, and that deservedly, when they have expatiated in their thoughts about the greatness of the hope of their calling, that they are ready sometimes to say, And will God give such a blessing to me? You know what is said of the disciples, and it is one of the oddest accounts that can be given of unbelief, that while they beheld him, *they believed not for joy*, Luke xxiv. 41. They loved Christ so well, they sorrowed for his death so deeply, and were so overjoyed at the sight of him risen again, that they could not tell how to believe their own eyes, as we usually say; the news was, as they thought, too good to be true. People are sometimes slacker to believe that which they would very fain have come to pass. Thus Jacob's *heart fainted*, when he was told that his son Joseph was yet alive, and more than that, was *governor over all the land of Egypt*, Gen. xlv. 26.

3. The awfulneſs of the paſſage to eternal life, makes the faith of it yet harder. If all believers were dealt with as Elijah was, that after they have accompliſhed their courſe of ſervice and ſuffering upon the earth, they ſhould be ſent for, as it were in a chariot of fire, to be carried up to heaven; it would be an exit, if I may ſo ſpeak, ſuitable to their expectations. But now for a poor believer, that hath been fed all his life long with the promiſes of eternal life in the goſpel, and has been cheering his heart thereby, that this man ſhould lie down in the duſt, ſhould walk through the vale and ſhadow of death, ſhould leave his body a prey to worms and rottenneſs in the grave, this ſeemeth very hard. Will not every one ſay, Is this the way to eternal life? This is a ſtrange way to heaven, that lies through death and the grave, and through the loweſt and moſt abject ſtate that a man can be in. Yet thus our Lord went into his glory, only bating the corruption of the grave, which he could not ſuffer; but thro' death, and ſufferings, and groanings, and pain, he yielded up the ghoſt, was buried, and lay under the power of death, until the time appointed of the Father for his reſurrection out of it. There is no Chriſtian, but finds this to be true which I ſpeak, that the dark black paſſage of death makes the difficulty great in believing eternal life. How far remote is it from all our reaſon, and from all our deſires, that the laſt ſtep in our journey to heaven, ſhould be through ſo thick and deep a mire as death itſelf is?

4. The myſtery of the title and right that a believer hath in eternal life, makes the believing of it the harder ſtill. His title and right to it lies in another, and not in himſelf; it lies in the righteouſneſs, and worth, and purchaſe, and merit of the Son of God; ſo that the faith of eternal life cannot be kept clear in the heart of a believer, unleſs Chriſt, who is the hope of glory, be kept clear in our eye by faith.

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5. There are many miſgivings of heart that believers cannot well avoid; and if they cannot avoid them, they muſt meet them; and when they meet them, they muſt wreſtle with them, and overcome them. The poor Iſraelites are not to be excuſed, but are much to be pitied; they were brought out of the land of Egypt with a high hand, God granted them a great deliverance through the Red-ſea, they ſung joyfully upon the other ſide in the view of the great diſcomfiture of all their enemies, and like enough they expected nothing, but very quickly they ſhould come to the border of the good land. But when God led them about and tried them, they ſinned; when they ſinned, he puniſhed them; under their puniſhment they repine and rebel, they vex him, and a great deal of ſorrow came thereupon. Believers are in great danger of ſomething like this; many faintings and miſgivings of heart ſeize upon believers as to the hope of their calling. (1.) Conſcience of utter unworthineſs. (2.) Senſe of great unmeetneſs for it. 1. Conſcience of utter unworthineſs of this great prize, and every Chriſtian hath this. No man will ever get to heaven that thinks he deſerves it; for it is certain, whoever thinks he deſerves heaven, may conclude from the word of God, there is a bar and bolt drawn upon heaven's gates againſt that proud ſinner; for it is the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. But this is not uſually ſo hard; this temptation does not ſo frequently diſtreſs believers, as the other; they know the reward of eternal life is a reward of grace; they know that it was dearly bought, freely promiſed, and is graciouſly given unto the ſeed of Chriſt: but here comes in the *ſecond.* A ſenſe of great unmeetneſs for it, ſays the poor Chriſtian; I know I am unworthy of it. And ſo was Paul, the laſt hour of Paul's life, he was unworthy of heaven. But, ſay you, here is the great diſcouragement, I am unmeet for it. But conſider, that God works meetneſs in his people for heaven: *Giving thanks unto the Father,*

which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12. Though I know that the word there in the original might be very well otherwiſe rendered, who hath *graced* us and privileged us with his favour, as it may alſo be rendered in 2 Corinth. iii. 6. But now this only I would have to be conſidered about meetneſs; it is certain that none are poſſeſſed of heaven, but they that are meet for it; it is as certain that all believers when they come to lay their claim to eternal life, are all alike unmeet in their own apprehenſions. There is a great difference between ſome and others, as to their meetneſs for heaven: an ordinary Chriſtian muſt not pretend to be as meet for heaven as Paul was; but there is not a Chriſtian but ſtands upon the ſame level with Paul, as to his pretenſions and claim to eternal life. What would Paul be at? He would be *found in him, not having his own righteouſneſs*; and ſo would every believer be. God works meetneſs for heaven in them, that he makes poſſeſſors of it in a deep myſterious way. The ſenſe of this meetneſs is, that that is never to obſtruct pure and mere faith. Suppoſe, and it is a caſe that I wiſh it were not a bare ſuppoſition, but were more frequent and with a good foundation; ſuppoſe, I ſay, that the grace of God ſeize a poor young creature, call him early, prevent him from wallowing in the puddle and mire of the world's wickedneſs; ſuppoſe ſtill the ſame grace ſanctify him, and this ſanctified creature ſhould grow up more and more unto the ſtature of a grown Chriſtian for many years in the houſe of God: now you will ſay, this man is meet for heaven; he is ſo, God hath made him ſo. Pray now let this man be examined about his meetneſs, and let his laſt plea as it were be heard, when he is knocking at heaven's gate for entry at laſt. It is only upon the account of the common foundation that every believer's faith is fixed upon; God will ſave none but thoſe he ſanctifies; but eternal life follows more immediately

ately upon juſtification; our title to eternal life comes from the ſame righteouſneſs that the forgiveneſs of our ſins flows from.

6. There is a ſpecial activity of Satan in tempting believers, that makes this work yet the harder. The devil's great work in this world is to increaſe bad works, and to hinder good works; to keep them that are bad, bad ſtill, and make them worſe; and to hinder them that are bad from being good, and the good from growing better, and the beſt from being perfect. Believers are the ſpecial mark of the devil's malice; and there are two times wherein, be ſure, if the devil may have his will, and he hath a great deal lent him by our Lord; there are two times wherein a poor child of God may be ſure to meet with the devil, if the devil be not bound by more than an ordinary reſtraint. The firſt time is, when the poor elect child of God is ſtepping out of nature into grace; the other is, when he is ſtepping out of grace up to glory. If the devil can poſſibly have his will, and it is rarely denied him, he will ſhoot his fiery darts in theſe caſes. When a poor ſinner is leaving Satan's camp, and going over into Chriſt's kingdom, when he is juſt upon delivery from the power of darkneſs, and of being tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear Son, then the devil bends his bow, and lets fly thick and apace. A great many poor creatures that never knew there was a devil in hell, or out of hell, till this time, as long as they were in nature and quiet, the devil was quiet too; but when Chriſt came to pull them, and draw them, and bring them home to himſelf, they then found they had been under the keeping of an enemy, that was loath to part with them. The laſt caſe is much the ſame: When a poor creature is going over to Chriſt, the devil is loſing his right; when going to heaven, the devil is loſing all opportunity againſt him. There are few of the people of God that, in walking through the vale of the ſhadow of death, do not feel this ſerpent bruiſing

their

their heel; but if they once be well landed, the ſmart will quickly be gone.

Laſtly, There is ſome wiſe deep contrivance of God in this matter. The Lord hath ordered the matter of our ſalvation ſo, that believing ſhall be hard, and the laſt believing ſtill hardeſt; ſo he hath ordered our right to eternal life: all is lying in another, nothing in us; we have a right in and by Chriſt, our charter of eternal life lies in God's word. In the conducting of the people of God, the Lord guides them ſo, that pure believing is never put out of its office; whatever he give, whatever path he leads them in, this remains continually uſeful and needful to them, that they muſt ſtill go out of themſelves, and exercise dependence upon another, upon the Lord alone. The whole contrivance of the way of our ſalvation, I mean the way of God's working with us about ſalvation, is framed for this end, that believing ſhall be perpetually uſed; the contrivance of the way of ſalvation for us, is made on purpoſe for the glory of God's grace through Chriſt Jeſus; it is contrived for this purpoſe, that all the way we ſhould believe; whatever we receive, we muſt truſt ſtill, for the great hope of our calling. So much for this *ſecond* thing, What the difficulties are of believing eternal life.

The *third* thing is, How theſe are to be overcome; where is the victory that believers muſt have over all theſe difficulties? *And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, 1 John v. 4. The victory lies in this word, *Faithful is he that promiſed.* Let the difficulties that lie in the way of believing be never ſo great, we muſt hold up this as a ſhield againſt them all, *Faithful is he that promiſed;* and in order to guide you in the right way of uſing it, I would offer you four or five things.

1. Muſe, think often, both on the promiſe, and on the promiſer. They whoſe minds and thoughts are not much taken up about the faithful God, and the

the faithful promise of God, how can it be expected that they should believe well? Entertain, I say, a frequent savoury remembrance both of the promise and promiser. Our Lord charges his disciples with this, *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe*, John xiv. 29. and xvi. 4. Remember it then, that you may believe more. Can you imagine it possible, that faith should flourish in the heart, when the promise and promiser is out of the eye, and out of the mind? That is utterly impossible.

2. Pray to the promiser upon the promise. He that prays much, believes well; and no man that neglects prayer, can act faith. We pray upon the promise to the promiser: *Remember the word unto thy servant*, says David, *upon which thou hast caused me to hope*, Psalm cxix. 49. The promises are given for our faith, and our faith is to be acted in praying upon them; and when we pray upon the promises, we pray to him that made them, and he that made them can certainly perform them.

3. Build upon the promises, lay your weight on them. The apostle Jude requires us to *build up ourselves in our most holy faith.* Faith is on the promises; and our building ourselves upon our most holy faith, is building on the promises by faith. The promise of God can bear every thing, any thing, and we must lay upon it; we must lay every thing whatsoever upon the promise of God, all our desire, all our cares, all our weights, all our burthens, but especially of eternal life, which, as you know, we cannot bear ourselves; let the promise of God bear them; and in this matter of our eternal salvation, we know we cannot bear it of ourselves. This burthen we must lay upon the promise, since it must be borne, or we are undone utterly. If this great affair of our eternal salvation be not laid upon a solid unsinking foundation, we are gone for ever; there is no foundation,

but

but the foundation of God, that ſtandeth ſure, that of his faithful word.

4. You muſt learn to reaſon and argue upon the promiſes. A beſſed way of exerciſing faith is to be reaſoning by faith. There are faith's reaſonings that have a great deal of excellency in them, a great deal of uſe. If I may ſo ſpeak, it is a ſort of pity that ſuch good words ſhould ever come out of ſo wicked a mouth as Balaam's; the man ſpoke words of faith, that he knew nothing of; Numb. xxiii. 19. *God is not a man that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man that he ſhould repent: hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* With a better heart uſe theſe bleſſed words. The Spirit of God overawed the man's tongue to ſpeak them, and the Spirit of God guided Moſes's pen to write them; therefore, though they are ſpoken by a falſe prophet, it is a part of precious ſcripture, it is of the arguings of faith: *Hath God ſaid, and ſhall he not do it?* There is never a man nor all the devils in hell ſhall be able to ſay, Here is a word of God which he did not make good. See alſo, 1 Sam. xv. 29. I would only help you to a few of theſe reaſonings of faith, that you may think of and uſe at any time, as God inclines your hearts.

1*ſt*, God knew what he promiſed, when he promiſed. Though God promiſed me eternal life, I do not know what is in this eternal life, but God knows full well. We are puzzled, we are darkened in the ſtudying the doctrine of grace, and the great prize of our calling; but God knows it well; he promiſes no bleſſing unknown to himſelf though it be unknown to us.

2*dly*, He knew to whom he gave the promiſe, he knew what they were, he knew what they would be, he knew what they would prove. When God delivered to me, ſaith a poor believer, the promiſe of eternal life in the goſpel, he knew what I was, in the day I laid hold of it, John xiv. 18. xvi. 31. xiii. 36, 38.

3*dly*,

3*dly*, This is arguing of faith, when the promise and promiser hath engaged our trust and confidence in any case, we may argue upon that; he hath not only promised, but he hath begotten expectations in our hearts concerning the thing he hath spoken of; and will he fail in the word upon which he has caused us to hope? Hast thou added the power with the word, so as to make me hope in it, and wilt thou not perform it? Psalm cxix. 49. 2 Sam. vii. 20. 27.

4*thly*, Has not God begun to perform his promises to us; and should we not argue by faith, that we should trust in them more and more? The promise of eternal life is begun to all believers: He hath *quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together* in regeneration, *and made us sit together in heavenly places* in him as our head; and will not rest come on then? *Being confident*, says the apostle, *of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. i. 6. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

Lastly, This is an arguing of faith, God's design in making, keeping, and performing this promise, is the same with the believer's design in receiving and resting on the promise; the same thing that God designed in the making, and keeping, and fulfilling his word; the same thing the believer designs in his taking, and trusting, and waiting for the performance of the word. What is God's great design? God's great design is to glorify *the exceeding riches of his kindness towards us in Jesus Christ*, as the apostle tells us, Eph. ii. 7. What does the believer design? He designs the same thing. God promises us eternal life to the praise of the glory of his grace in Christ Jesus; what more would the believer have? In the day that he lays hold on the promise by faith, he means nothing else but this; he seeks nothing else, but that he may have eternal life, to the praise of God's grace in Christ Jesus. Hath God designed, in making the promise, to glorify his faithfulness? I, in believing

the promiſe, deſign the ſame thing. Now, whenever God and a poor believer jump in the ſame deſign, it is impoſſible that it ſhould miſcarry. Indeed, if God deſigned one thing, and we another, God would reach his end, and we ſhould lament our folly; but if we intend the ſame thing in all our faith in the promiſes, that God intends in making them, a diſappointment is impoſſible. See Phil. iii. 12. 1 Peter v. 10.

The *laſt* thing is, That you muſt take this truth of God, *Faithful is he that promiſes*, and keep it in the hand of your faith in life and in death; hold it faſt continually, keep it ſtill as your anchor. When the body is decayed, when Satan is tempting, when the heart is miſgiving, when pale death ſettles upon your eye-lids, when an awful judgment is ſtaring you in the face, nothing but this, *Faithful is he that promiſes*, will ſupport us. Weak is the believer, but faithful is the promiſer. So much for theſe three exhortations that I promiſed and have now ſpoke to from theſe words.

There is one more, and that I would conclude with. I have been exhorting you to glorify God's faithfulneſs, by venturing on the promiſe of ſalvation by Chriſt in the goſpel; to glorify God's faithfulneſs, by believing all covenant-bleſſings by the way; and to glorify God's faithfulneſs, by believing eternal life in the end. Only one word more, and that is the greateſt of all. Glorify God's faithfulneſs by believing the promiſes about Sion and Chriſt's kingdom, though its ſtate be ever ſo low. It was a good ſaying of a believer, in dark and diſmal times, "Now it is "time to believe." The great believer had a kind of joy in dark hours, becauſe there was ſuch a fair field for faith to act on God's faithfulneſs. I believe many of you do not know much of the ſtate of the work of Chriſt abroad in the world, and a great many are little careful to know it that ſhould; but, by all the little hints that we have any manner of way, it is exceeding

ceeding low at this day: let us believe notwithſtanding it ſhall be well; this great faithful promiſer hath promiſed great things about Chriſt's kingdom, and we muſt believe greatly about them; the ſtrongeſt faith ſhould be put forth here.

1. The promiſes that we are to believe on for Chriſt's kingdom, are Chriſt's promiſes. My meaning is, not only that they are by Chriſt, for all are ſo: but they are made to him; ſo, in ſome ſenſe, all are too; but they are made to him primarily, they are made to him for his body's ſake, the church. Shall we not believe firmly the promiſes of the Father to the Son? *Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and with juſtice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this*, Iſaiah ix. 7. Let the faith of believers believe it then.

2. Theſe great promiſes we are to believe about Chriſt's kingdom, are moſt free to the church, but they are moſt dear to Chriſt Jeſus, and he hath already paid the price for them; he hath bought the kingdom already, and all that glory that is given him; *that name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 10, 11.

3. Theſe promiſes are greatly fulfilled already, and we ſhould believe them the more firmly upon that account. Our Lord himſelf, the great heir of the promiſes is, as well as we can wiſh him, and better than we can think, exalted at the Father's right hand above all his enemies. If there were a hoſt of all Chriſt's enemies together, it may be, they would be as bold as ever; but if all the devils in hell, and all wicked men on earth were conjoined againſt him,

yet a ſight of his glory would chaſe them to hell, Eph. iii. 20.

4. Believe theſe promiſes, for they are the largeſt and moſt comprehenſive of all. The promiſes of Chriſt's kingdom, are the ſtock of all the faith of God's children in all ages. Pray whence comes thy converſion, juſtification, calling, or being brought home to God? It came out of the womb of the promiſes of the Father made to his Son: *He ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many, for he ſhall bear their iniquities.* All the ſaving grace that we receive, comes from theſe promiſes that are made to Chriſt; and what we deſire now, is but the fulfilling of them. What is there that we deſire in all this world but this, that a great many ungodly people may be converted, and that all the godly may be eminent in grace, and at laſt ripe for glory? All theſe are contained in Chriſt's promiſes, theſe promiſes wherein the faithfulneſs of God is engaged: he hath promiſed this to David, that he will *eſtabliſh his ſeed for ever, and build up his throne to all generations*, Pſalm lxxxix. 4. You have ground ſure enough for your faith, and you cannot be more happy than to have faith enough for your work. The Lord furniſh you with it.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

HEBREWS x. 24.

------And let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works.

HAVING spoke so long upon the preceding verses, I thought fit, before I left this scripture, not to pass this that follows. The apostle, from these grounds that you have heard at great length, from the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses, draws three exhortations. The first is with respect to our duty, in the 22d verse, That we should draw near to him. The second exhortation is to a duty that respects ourselves, and our profession of faith, in the 23d verse, which I have stood long upon. The third exhortation is in the words read, and that is to a duty that respecteth others. This is indeed the right method, that conscience be made of what we are to God, and care be taken of what concerneth ourselves, before we be in a case to discharge any Christian duty towards others.

This scripture I mean to speak but a little to, and was something doubtful in speaking to it at all, not from any doubt of its pertinency, but from a mighty doubt of its fruit; for the duty called to in this verse is so neglected, that it is not readily to be hoped people will much mind it, when they hear of it, till at least they begin to know faith the spring of it: but when I considered that these two things, love and good works, are so very scarce, and that Christian fellowship is so worn out of use amongst them that are called Christians, I thought something should be said of them, though I were never so afraid that little good would

would be done by it; and therefore for once I will ſpeak a little to it.

In this verſe therefore lying before us, there is an exhortation to a duty that is very remarkably expreſſed by the apoſtle. There is, 1. The matter of the duty in general, to *conſider one another*. "Let us," would the apoſtle ſay, "that are brethren, and that "know the way to the holieſt of all, who have ſome "faith, a ſprinkled conſcience, and a clean converſa-"tion, and have made profeſſion of our faith, *let us* "*conſider one another*." The original imports a narrow looking one to another.

2. There is the end that this duty is injoined for; and that is, to *provoke us unto love, and to good works*, ſo we read it; but the word in the original is far more ſignificant than our tranſlation carrieth it: Conſider one another in order to a *paroxyſm*, or high hot fit of love and good works, to ſtir up mightily thereto.

I would at this time ſpeak a little to both of theſe.

1. To the matter of the duty, *Conſidering one another*; then, 2. The end of it, *provoking unto love, and to good works*.

Firſt, The duty, *Conſidering one another*. This implieth,

1. That there is a plurality of Chriſtians. If ſo be there were but one Chriſtian in one place, he would have nothing to do with ſuch a place of ſcripture; he is only to walk wiſely to them that are without, where the providence of God calls him; but this conſidering one another is no work for him.

2. It implies, that they are known one to another. When the apoſtle bids us conſider one another, it neceſſarily implies, that we may know one another; and truly Chriſtians are eaſily known one to another. I do not mean them that go with the herd, that call themſelves Chriſtians out of compliment, or faſhion, or are Chriſtians by reaſon the place where they were born profeſſeth Chriſtianity; if this be all, it is no

eaſy

eaſy matter to know them: but ſuch as have the power of the grace of God at work on their heart; and even here it is not ſo hard a matter for one Chriſtian to know another.

3. Here is implied, and follows in the text, their meeting together; this is a part of their profeſſion, *Not forſaking the aſſembling of yourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* This *conſidering*, that implies theſe things is ſpoken with reſpect to our Lord the head, with reſpect to ourſelves, and with reſpect to our brethren. The ſame apoſtle bids us *conſider the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our profeſſion Chriſt Jeſus*, chap. iii. 1. That is a bleſſed conſideration with reſpect to patience in ſuffering: *Conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds*, Heb. xii. 3. As if the apoſtle would ſay, "If you would uſe to "ponder how Chriſt was uſed in the world, and how "many foul tongues were employed againſt him, ye "would think little of all the contradictions you meet "with." For one ſinner to contradict another ſinner, is no great matter; for a ſinner to contradict a ſaint, no great matter neither: but for wicked ſinners to contradict the Saviour, is the wonder. We are bid to conſider ourſelves, that *if any ſee another overtaken in a fault, we might reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering ourſelves, leſt we be alſo tempted.*

Now particularly what this conſidering of others is, will you hear of it, and mind it a little more, what that Chriſtian duty of conſidering Chriſtians aright is. You know, that conſidering is a ſerious employment of the mind; this employment is about other folks, and this employment muſt be about every thing in them and about them that we can diſcern. Theſe I would reduce to three heads, their good, their bad, and what is indifferent, neither good nor bad in itſelf, but as it is guided.

1ſt, In conſidering of other Chriſtians, ye ſhould conſider their good. I will not ſay, that always it is the

the wiſeſt work for a man, in conſidering himſelf, to begin with conſidering his good; but I dare ſay, it is the wiſeſt work in conſidering others, to do ſo. Our Lord, in the ſeven letters he wrote to the ſeven churches of Aſia, begins always with their good, if there were any good in them, and commends them, before he takes notice of, and reproves for their faults. A Chriſtian is very ill conſidered, if all his good and the beſt things in him is forgot. Amongſt thoſe good things that are to be conſidered in order to *provoke unto love, and to good works.*

(1.) We ſhould conſider the grace of God that is in them, when it becomes viſible, and viſible it will be, if of the right kind. Barnabas ſaw the grace of God among them at Antioch, Acts xi. 23. The apoſtles ſaw the grace of God that was given to Paul, Gal. ii. 8, 9. Sirs, communion of ſaints is one of the articles of our creed, as we call it; and there is ſo much ſpoken of it in the word, and it is ſo great a bleſſing, that it is a thing impoſſible, that grace in ſaints ſhould not be knowable by ſaints. If no man could know the grace of God in any other but himſelf, that man indeed might have communion with God, but he could have no communion with the ſaints. The main thing that we are to regard and to conſider in Chriſtians, is the truth of the grace of God in them, their ſhining in the image of their heavenly Father, and their partaking of the Spirit of Jeſus. Whereever theſe characters and ſignatures are, a ſpiritual eye can diſcern them.

(2.) We ſhould conſider the ſtation they have in the body of Jeſus Chriſt, and that alſo is diſcernable; I mean, what ſtate, what place, what room, the Lord hath called them to, or placed them in, not with reſpect to their office in the church; that is a thing of another conſideration, but with reſpect to honourable ſervice; the Lord gives his grace in various meaſures to his people, and in ſome it is a matter very remarkable, that quickly after the Lord hath begun

begun to communicate of his grace to them, he intends to prove them in a higher sphere than ordinary; we must consider, what marks the Lord hath put upon them, that we know to be Christians of a more than ordinary stature, and usefulness, and service in the body of Christ, of which the apostle speaks so much, 1 Cor. xii. almost throughout.

2*dly*, We are to consider Christians in their bad things; can there be any provoking unto love and good works, in seeing of their bad things? Yes, a great deal; amongst the bad things in Christians, I reckon,

(1.) Their sins and their infirmities; these are to be tenderly regarded, and looked upon, their weakness, their stumbling; the apostle calls much for a spirit of meekness towards such, a great deal of tenderness must be used, happy are they that can represent and express the tender heart of Jesus Christ towards sinners in a Christian-like tenderness, towards sinning and stumbling believers; see what tenderness the apostle requires as to this, 1 Cor. vii. There is a poor weak Christian, it may be stumbled, when he saw people making use of what was ordinarily bought in the market, it may be a great deal of the meat that was sold there, had first been shown before their idols and presented in their temples, and the poor weak Christian scrupled this, and thought it a sad thing for a Christian to make use of his liberty this way, says the apostle, *Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?* ver. 11. For my part says he, *I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

(2.) We should consider folks temptations and afflictions, we should look on them so as *to provoke unto love, and to good works;* the more tempted and afflicted they are, the more need have they of pity from the Lord their head, and of compassion from all their brethren. The apostle Paul expressed this tenderness of spirit, and oh for some measure of it among us!

2 Cor. xi. 29. Beſides all his own ſufferings, of which he names a great many, as perils by ſea and land, and from his own country-men, as well as heathens, nay, all ſorts of diſtreſſes, beſides all theſe things, he had the care of all the churches devolved upon him, what ſort of care was this think you? Was this like the Pope's care that he pretends to have over the face of the earth, where-ever the name of a Chriſtian is? This was not thought of by the apoſtle, the care of all the churches was only a care of tenderneſs and ſympathy, like the care of a mother to her children, when any of them are ſick, *Who is weak*, ſays he, *and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* What a brave ſpirit is here! Did not a diſtreſs come upon any Chriſtian, the apoſtle knew of, but his heart felt the ſmart of it?

3*dly*, There are ſome things that we are to conſider in Chriſtians, that are in themſelves neither good nor bad, but are of an indifferent nature, yet are to be conſidered, and are of great uſe to *provoke to love, and to good works.*

(1.) There is a conſideration to be had of a Chriſtian's education, of the place of his converſation, and of the means and helps that he hath or wants; there is a great matter in this. I do not ſay, that always ſuch Chriſtians are of the beſt complexion, as to their inner man, that are born again under the greateſt advantages of the goſpel means, only this is that I drive at, that the truth of the grace of God may be planted in the heart of a poor creature, where the means of grace have been but ſmall, and his help and advantages but few; now a great deal of tenderneſs is to be exerciſed towards ſuch a one; the apoſtle takes frequent notice of it, as to himſelf, though indeed the grace of God to him was extraordinary; Acts xxii. I do not mean, that the apoſtle thinks to extenuate his ſin before God by the mentioning it, but rather he mentions it to inhance the grace of God that took hold of him; that it was a ſufficient ground for abating

abating the ſeverity of cenſure from other Chriſtians, when they reflected upon his former converſation.

(2.) We ſhould in things indifferent conſider their natural temper; tempers of mind vary as much as features of the face, we commonly obſerve it with great wonder, that there is not to be ſeen in a whole kingdom two faces ſo exactly alike, but that we diſcern ſome difference, and there is a great difference in the natural tempers of folks minds; where the grace of God is grafted upon a good natural temper; it does ſet it off, I acknowledge very beautifully; abundance of grace ſown in them, that have an equal temper of mind, makes a Chriſtian appear very amiable; but the grace of God does not ordinarily fall there, the Lord commonly ſows his grace in the worſt ſoil, the heart of every man by nature is bad enough, but there are ſome worſe than ordinary, and God plants his grace frequently there; now when the grace of God comes, it is appointed to change our natural ſtate, as we are ſinners, and to make us believers, of ſinners to make us ſaints; but it was never appointed to change our natural temper, he that is born, as it were, with a haſty, hot, warm temper, the grace of God may guide that, and put it into a right channel, but rarely, if ever, does remove it; now it is to be obſerved, that a great many of the offences, that Chriſtians take one at another, are upon the account of the breakings out of their natural tempers, but we ſhould give allowance to theſe things; it is very likely, that our Lord in calling his diſciples had regard unto this, and names them accordingly; Peter ſeems to be a forward, zealous, bold man, James and John ſeem to have been warm hot men, they are called ſons of thunder, would our Lord ſay, I will graft my grace upon theſe men? And I will make uſe of their natural temper for the ſetting forth ſome piece of work, that ſuch and ſuch are fitteſt for? We ſee then the wonderful wiſdom of God, in guiding the corruptions of his people; and ſhould we

wonder at this, that the ſame wiſdom ſhould guide the natural infirmities of his people, and make them ſerviceable ſo much the more in their time? We muſt conſider I ſay, one another's natural temper, and give ſome grains of allowance thereto.

(3.) Among the things indifferent, I reckon peoples outward eſtate in the world: Not many wiſe after the fleſh, not many noble, not many rich, and not many mighty are called, but now and then ſome be, and it is very obſervable, that through want of a due conſideration of this, a Chriſtian that is very high and rich, and wiſe in this world, and a poor low weak Chriſtian as to his condition and natural parts, are uſually very bad company, they are very apt not duly to conſider one another, with reſpect to this; the poor are apt to envy them that are above them, and they that are high to deſpiſe them that are below them, the word of God warns againſt both.

(4.) People's age and ſtanding in Chriſt's houſe, is to be conſidered by us; when we conſider one another, we are not, we muſt not expect thoſe experiences and attainments in a novice, and one that is newly come to the faith, that we may look for, and expect in them that are of long ſtanding in the houſe of the Lord, the apoſtle takes notice of this, and he checks them that had this ſtanding. *For when for the time*, ſays he, *ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat.* See how the ſpirit of God by Paul directs Timothy to his carriage, 1 Epiſt. v. 1. *Rebuke not an elder*, ſays he, *but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren. The elder women as mothers, the younger as ſiſters, with all purity.* How diſtinctly does the apoſtle direct his diſcourſe unto fathers, and young men and children.

Laſtly, Chriſtians different light about ſmaller matters ſhould be conſidered, in order to provoking *unto love, and good works*; if people lay aſide the duty of love,

love, till they be all of one mind in all things, they may leave love till they come to heaven, and truly they look unlike them, that ever will be in heaven, that are ſtrangers to love when they be on earth; how tenderly does the apoſtle apply himſelf unto this; Rom. xiv. 1.----5. Rom. xv. 1.----4! *Him that is weak in the faith*, ſays he, *receive you, but not to doubtful diſputations:* What were thoſe doubtful diſputations? Theſe were not whether we are juſtified by Chriſt, or by good works, or by both together, they were about ſmall little things, they were about food, ſome would eat nothing but herbs, and had no liberty to eat fleſh, there were others that were ſtrong, and they could eat freely any thing, but ſays the apoſtle, *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not.* That is his weakneſs, and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth, for the man walks according to his light, and indeed according to truth; one obſerves a day and another not, his non-obſerving is an act of worſhip to the Lord, how excellently does the apoſtle comment upon theſe things! The meaning was this, In the beginning of Chriſtianity, there was ſome of the Chriſtians, that had been Jews, and were not yet altogether ſo far reformed from what they had profeſſed before, but that they ſtill retained, and were fond of their old ceremonies and cuſtoms, wherefore the apoſtle exhorts them to bear with love and tenderneſs with all ſuch perſons. The apoſtle therefore in ſome places did tolerate their weakneſs, yet notwithſtanding when theſe ſmall things are brought in upon an high account, how does he thunder againſt them! He ſpeaks ſo tenderly to the Romans, to doubtful believers, yet to ſome that would obſerve days, and abſtain from meats, he is as ſevere, *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years*, &c. Ye are men that are parting from Chriſt, ſays he, why ſo? Becauſe they did place a piece of their worſhip therein, and thought they would render them acceptable to God, and therefore brought

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in theſe Jewiſh rites and ceremonies into the matter of juſtification before God. The Lord hath not given all his people the ſame light, we are to be fully perſuaded in our own minds about our own light, *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind*, Rom. xiv. 5. But that is but an ill ſort of being perſuaded in our own mind, that brings this perſuaſion alſo, that they who are not of our mind, are not right before God; ſo much for the firſt thing, the matter of the duty, conſidering one another.

The *ſecond* thing to be ſpoke to, is what the end of this is, *To provoke unto love and good works.*

1. The firſt thing I note in this end is, You find love and good works joined together. Good works, or holineſs will never thrive amongſt Chriſtians, where love is under a decay, *Where envying and ſtrife is*, ſays the apoſtle James, *there is confuſion, and every evil work*, chap. iii. 16. not only *there is an evil work*, but there is *every evil work.* The edifying and building up of the church by their mutual communion, as well as by communications from the head, Eph. iv. 16. is expreſly determined to be in this, *edifying of itſelf in love. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part; maketh increaſe of the body, unto the edifying of itſelf in love;* as if the apoſtle had expreſly pointed forth, that the general ſpirit of love is as it were the cement, and nutriment of the whole body of Jeſus Chriſt; grace from the head, and ſpiritual love of the members one to another, is as the ſpring to their growth

2. We find that the increaſe of love and holineſs, is the proper and right end of Chriſtian communion. For this end churches are appointed by Jeſus Chriſt that they may be ſocieties for building up a company that he calls out of the world in love to God and to one another in holineſs, till he tranſplant them to the church above.

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3. The making this the end, ſpeaks forth this, that the beſt of Chriſtians ſtand in need of being mightily ſtirred up unto love, and to good works, or why ſtood the Hebrews in need of being ſo ſtirred up? We have the ſame word in the original, in 2 Cor. ix. 2. *Your zeal hath provoked very many.* The grace of God, and the Spirit of holineſs is ingrafted in the hearts of every Chriſtian; but notwithſtanding, every one ſhould make conſcience to water this, to ſtir it up, to blow upon this little fire, and to increaſe it.

APPLICATION.

The firſt word ſhall be a word of reproof or lamentation. How ſadly is it to be bewailed, that love and good works are ſo rare, and the means for them ſo neglected? that there is ſo little conſidering one another, *to provoke unto love, and to good works?* If it were not for the name of churches that is amongſt us, one would hardly underſtand, that there is ſuch a company of Chriſtians amongſt us; that conſidering one another *to provoke unto love, and to good works,* the Lord knows how few mind. How many are there of our Chriſtians, that are not a bit the better for their fellow Chriſtians, ſince the day God gave grace to them? Is there no Chriſtian of your acquaintance, that you can labour to do good to? I never expect that perſon is fit to get good from others, that is not ready to do good to others. The ſpirit of humility, that makes us ready to receive good from others, will work a ſpirit of love in readineſs to do good to others. Now, that this matter is neglected, is not all we have to complain of; but the contrary thereto is that which I would bewail and reprove, and the Lord makes reproof light where it is moſt juſtly deſerved.

1. There are a great many people, that conſider one another's infirmities to blaze them abroad; inſtead of conſidering one another *to provoke unto love,*

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and to good works, they conſider their infirmities to take notice of them, and to blow a trumpet upon their failings. I have often ſeen, and you may obſerve it, and may have found, that very often ſuch profeſſors as have been given much to the obſerving of the infirmities of ſaints, and then publiſhing of them, have been left of God to be apoſtates from the truth of the goſpel themſelves. It is a greater tranſgreſſion than you are aware of, to obſerve the infirmities of ſaints, on purpoſe as it were to crow over the profeſſion, becauſe of the faults of them that make it. Let us always be tender of the name of Jeſus Chriſt. If men that are not Chriſtians are yet called ſo, and fall, let them get their juſt ſhame; the way of the Lord is not a whit the worſe becauſe a tranſgreſſor falls therein; the fault is not in the way, but in the walker. *Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent, and he ſhall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them: but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein*, Hoſea xiv. 9.

2. Some conſider one another's infirmities to imitate them, and to excuſe themſelves in the like practice. This is juſt contrary to what is in my text. Inſtead of conſidering one another to *provoke unto love, and to good works*, they conſider others in their failings and infirmities, they take notice of a great many infirmities in the people of God; they think with themſelves, Why may not I do ſo too? Such a miniſter or Chriſtian has done ſo and ſo; why may not I? This is a moſt dangerous practice, for people to take notice of the infirmities and failings of ſaints, to imitate them, and never take notice of their virtues to imitate them: therefore the apoſtle warns them in this manner, *Whoſe faith follow*, ſays he, *conſidering the end of their converſation;* regard their doctrine, regard their practice, imitate their faith. The wiſeſt obſerving of one another, is to ſpy out one another's good,

good, and labour to imitate it immediately. Wherever you ſee faith, and repentance, and believing, and holy walking with God, ſet about the imitating that. May I ſpeak of the loweſt, of the meaneſt, and of the moſt fooliſh practice amongſt us, a practice that, I am afraid, is a great deal too common in this place? inſtead of conſidering one another *to provoke unto love, and to good works*, many conſider one another to provoke to vanity and ſuperfluity. Inſtead of taking notice of the virtues of believers, it may be people take notice of their way of living, of their garb; it is well if a great many be not hardened thereby; If one wear ſuch a garb, why may not I? The righteous judgment of God will ever follow, where one Chriſtian makes not conſcience to obſerve and imitate the virtues of another, they ſhall be left of God, to obſerve and imitate the corruptions of one another. Let me therefore preſs it with theſe few, that you would mind well the plain words of the text, *to conſider one another*, &c. all the Chriſtians ye know, conſider in ſuch a manner, as that you may ſtir them up to love and holineſs.

1*ſt*, Is not this commanded by God? There is none that can read the new teſtament, and not find this commanded frequently, as Col. iii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. i. 5, 6, 7. and a great many other places.

2*dly*, Hath not this been practiſed by the ſaints of God in all ages? There was never a generation of believers that lived in any time of the world, but if they could converſe together, they would. There were a company of them long ſince in the old teſtament, that *feared the Lord, and thought on his name, that talked often one to another.* There were a company when Chriſt was born, and yet it was as dark a day as ever came upon the church, there was a company for all that, Luke ii. 30. that were *waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael;* and Anna, the old propheteſs, knew them, and went to ſpeak to all of them: like enough, ſhe knew where to find them that wait-

ed for redemption in Jeruſalem. This is a duty now to be practiſed, and there was never more need of it. What our Lord ſaid as a prophecy, hath been plentifully fulfilled in our day: *Becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold*, Matth. xxiv 12, 13. It is a duty the Lord hath always put a ſpecial remark upon, and hath taken great notice of, and for which *a book of remembrance was written*, Malachi iii. 16. For thoſe that had ſighed and cried, becauſe of all the abominations done in Jeruſalem, theſe are men marked, ſet apart for ſpecial mercy. I ſhall leave this matter with three or four notes.

(1.) Never did the grace of God reach a poor creature's heart, but with it there came an inſtinct after converſe with them of its own nature. Whenever one is made a new creature, they begin to look upon them that are new creatures in another matter, and a warmer way, than they did before.

(2.) Where-ever the power of godlineſs is ſpreading, Chriſtian communion always is. Never did the power of godlineſs flouriſh where this was neglected. Therefore I look upon it as one of the ſad ſigns that the power of Chriſtianity and the efficacy of the goſpel is greatly withdrawn from us, becauſe Chriſtian fellowſhip is ſo greatly neglected. I ſhall not tell you whence it comes particularly, and how it may be mended; much may be done to the mending of it. The Lord incline their hearts in whoſe hand it lies.

(3.) Where love and holineſs is not, the ſingle end of Chriſtian fellowſhip, the fellowſhip of Chriſtians, is a moſt dangerous ſnare. The communion of Chriſtians one with another is the moſt dangerous company one can be in, if ſo be that this be not the grand deſign, to promote love and holineſs. There have been ſuch meetings amongſt us, among them that are called Chriſtians, and it may be are truly ſo; many people of different perſuaſions have met together

ther for diſputation ; a moſt vain ſinful practice, that always flows from corruption, and always iſſues in deſtruction ; ſo far from good works, that it never was found to fail to provoke to hatred and ill works. It were far better that Chriſtians ſhould ſoberly retain their particular ſentiments.

Laſtly, Where Chriſtians are a plague to one another, it is a ſad ſign that God hath a mind to plague them all together. Where people neglect to do good to one another, where Chriſtians are hinderances one to another in the righteous ways of God, it portends that God will plague them all together. That is a ſad threatening, Ezek. xxii. 18. *Son of man, the houſe of Iſrael is to me become droſs ;* what ſhall I do to them ? ſays the Lord, *as they gather ſilver, and braſs, and lead, and tin into the midſt of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it ; ſo will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you*, good and bad in the ſame furnace, the ſilver and braſs, and tin, and iron. It is a fatal ſignification, when the inſtitutions of Chriſt's appointment are not only forgot, but when they are perverted to contrary ends, than he hath appointed them for ; it is a ſad ſignification what the iſſue may be.

SERMON XIV.

HEBREWS x. 20.

By a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us, through the veil, that is to ſay, his fleſh.

THE ſum of Chriſtianity is to know Chriſt, and to uſe him; to know him for uſe, is to uſe him as known; his name ſounds daily in the ears of multitudes, whoſe hearts never did once make uſe of him in the thing, if I may ſo ſpeak, that our Lord only is uſeful for them in, and that is, his great calling to ſalvation. The apoſtle in the context is upon both theſe; he is both upon the doctrine of Chriſt, and the improvement of it; in the doctrine of Chriſt, he does diſcover and reveal this great uſefulneſs for us in the matters of ſalvation, that the entry to the holieſt of all is through his blood, that the way to the holieſt of all is through his fleſh, that he himſelf is the great High Prieſt ſet over the houſe of God; theſe are in the 19th, 20th, and 21ſt verſes. From the 20th verſe, I take notice of three things to be ſpoken to.

Firſt, Where lies the way to heaven? How may a man find it? When is it one may be ſure he is in it? Says the apoſtle, It is *through the veil* of the fleſh of Chriſt. They that know not Chriſt, whatever they may pretend to, as to the knowledge of God or heaven, know nothing of either; and this I was ſpeaking to laſt day, That the way to heaven lies through the veil of the fleſh of Chriſt. Our Lord, in his helpfulneſs to us in our getting to heaven, is many ways ſpoken of in the word. Sometimes this great uſefulneſs is expreſſed of his *perſon*, he is the *peace*; ſometimes it is expreſſed concerning his *office*, he is the *Saviour*;

Saviour; ſometimes it is ſpoken of his *life*, and ſometimes of his *death;* ſometimes of his *fleſh*, and ſometimes of his *blood*. But whatever the words be that are uſed in the ſcripture, concerning our Lord in his calling as a Saviour, we are to take none of them apart, but to take all together; for Chriſt is not divided. His fleſh that is here ſpoken of, is his human nature offered in ſacrifice unto God, for the ſins and ſouls of his elect; and through this we muſt paſs, if we have a mind to heaven. It was an old cuſtom, it is likely its original was from an inſtitution, but it is very viſible that it was ſeveral times practiſed of old before the Levitical law, and that it was a ceremony in making of covenants, that ſome living creature ſhould be divided into two, and that the covenanting perſons paſſed through the parts thereof; which had a great ſecret imprecation in the oath, that ſo God might do to them as was done to the beaſt, if they did falſify their engagements; and this the Lord by the prophet charges ſeverely upon the people of Iſrael, for breaking his covenant: Jer. xxxiv. 18. *When they divided the calf in twain, and paſſed between the parts thereof.* Our divided and our ſlain Lord Jeſus is the great covenant-mean betwixt the Lord and us; and all that ſeek their peace with God and entrance to the heavenly kingdom, muſt paſs, if I may ſo ſpeak, through the parts of this divided and ſlain Son of God. Chriſt's fleſh is called the *vail*, becauſe it hides his glory, it is a vail, becauſe the paſſage to heaven lies through it, though the vail of the temple covered the holieſt of all from the eyes of all the people, yet through it a paſſage was for the High Prieſt at the appointed time. There are three things ſimply needful, not only needful to our ſalvation, but grand pieces of ſalvation. *The ſaving knowledge of God; acceptable worſhipping of God; and enjoyment of him.* In the ſaving knowledge of God, all graces are exerciſed, in acceptable worſhip all duties are performed, in the enjoyment of God all bleſſings and mercies are received.

received. Theſe three have all a mutual influence one upon another, the more there is of ſaving knowledge, the more there is of acceptable worſhip, and the more there is of both theſe, the more of communion with God. And thus it is both on earth and in heaven, only there is a wonderful difference in degree, for all theſe are low here, but are perfect above; our knowledge is dark, our worſhip is faulty, our enjoyment ſcanty, ſmall, and quickly paſſes away, our veſſel is narrow, and cannot receive much, and leaking, and cannot hold much, what it is they know above, and what worſhip they perform, and what enjoyment of God they receive, is above our knowledge; of their knowledge too the apoſtle ſpeaks ſingularly, *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to face, now I know in part; but then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The words that the apoſtle hath there, are very hard to be underſtood, but we might know ſomething of them by the former part of them, we know what it is *to know in part*, we know a little what it is to *ſee through a glaſs darkly*, but what face to face knowledge of God is, and what to *know* even *as alſo we are known*, we do not know; what is more common in the ſenſe and thoughts of believers than this, even in their neareſt approaches to God even in their cleareſt views of him, It is but a little that I know of him, but he knows me perfectly. Will ever that day be, that Paul ſhall know Chriſt as well as Chriſt knew Paul? I ſhall know even alſo as I am known, as clear, as ſatisfyingly, as far beyond what our preſent knowledge is, as any thing can be. *We ſhall be like him*, ſays the apoſtle John, *For we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved*, ſays he, *now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be.* Ay, but will it ever appear? Yes, ſays he, it will appear, when he ſhall appear, then we ſhall be like him, *for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, the knowledge we have of God and of Chriſt Jeſus now, is through the glaſs of

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the goſpel, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And the more that God ſhines upon that glaſs, and the more that he enlightens the eyes of our minds in beholding it, the more we perceive it; but now what a wonderful knowledge of Chriſt muſt that be, that is gathered and learned out of his face, when we ſhall ſee him as he is! Chriſt is a great deal better than the Bible, the Bible is a creature, the Bible is a created manifeſtation of the will of God, all our knowledge now of God and Chriſt muſt be bounded with that, muſt be determined by that, muſt be ſought from it; but the apoſtle tells us, there is another ſort of knowledge of Chriſt, to be hereafter, when we ſhall ſee him as he is; how they worſhip we do not know, we know what worſhipping in a temple is, but we do not know what worſhipping is without it, where *the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof*, Rev. xxi. 22. I only take notice of theſe things, becauſe I was ſaying that theſe were the main parts of ſalvation, and that we come only to them through Chriſt Jeſus; we cannot worſhip God acceptably but in Chriſt, we cannot enjoy God, but in Chriſt; never was there a gracious communication of God's love given unto men, but through Jeſus. The application of this truth, that the way to heaven lies through the vail of Chriſt's fleſh, I ſhall forbear until I have gone through the words of the text, upon the ſecond thing, which is *the properties of this way*, the way is through his fleſh, but what ſort of a way is it? The apoſtle gives us here three properties of it, and I will take one of them to ſpeak to at this time.

It is called a new way, it is called a living way, and it is called a conſecrated way for us; we would have no need of Chriſt's fleſh, or of its being made a vail; unleſs, that it had been the purpoſe of his grace to ſave a multitude of poor loſt ſinners in a way *conſecrated for us*.

Of the firſt of theſe, it is a new way; the meaning of this, is what I would diſcourſe a little to.

Firſt,

Firſt, To avoid miſtakes, I ſhall remove thoſe things, that this word may lead people to, and tell you what is not the meaning of the newneſs of this way, then poſitively what it is.

1. This is not a new way, as if it were of a new invention, of late contrivance and device of God, but is as old as eternity, and there can be nothing before nor after, in eternity; our Lord is the way to heaven, he is the *Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, and that in a uſual ſcripture ſenſe, as much as to ſay, *from eternity*, Rev. xiii. 8. *I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, Prov. viii. 24. His way is from everlaſting, Mic. v. 2. The way of ſaving men by Chriſt Jeſus is not a way of late invention, *It is according to the eternal purpoſe, which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, Eph. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.

2. Neither is it a new way, as if it were newly revealed, as if it were of late revelation, for this way of ſaving men by the ſon of God, is as old as ſin is, and was revealed immediately upon ſinning, in that way that we ſhall further hear of. Adam knew this way, Abel knew this way, and Enoch and Abraham ſaw Chriſt's day, and Chriſt was before him: *Before Abraham was, I am*, ſays our Lord, John. viii. 58.

3. Neither is it of late as to the uſe of it, for the benefit has been received by multitudes; all along by Abraham and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets that are in the kingdom of God; there is but one way to heaven, though this ſeems ſtrange to us. Adam died ſome thouſand years before Chriſt came into the world, before this vail was actually made; ſo did Abraham, ſo did the Old Teſtament church, according to the order of their generations, ſome a longer, and ſome a ſhorter while before: But they had the way for ſubſtance revealed to them, there was a revelation of God's good will towards them in ſuch ways as he thought good, whereby his pardoning grace and acceptance through a mediator, was

pointed

pointed out to them; they had the ſame hope that we have, and the ſame faith that we have, only with this difference, their faith was to look forward. And our faith is to look backward, their faith was in the Meſſiah to come, and our faith is in the Meſſiah which is come; their faith was in the vail of that fleſh that was to be reared up, and our faith is in the veil of his fleſh that has been reared up, and is now gone up to heaven; the ſame faith we have, ſaith the apoſtle, *the ſame ſpirit of faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. We find there is a great difference between David and Paul, as to their expreſſions of godlineſs, and as to the clearneſs of their knowledge, I, but, ſays the apoſtle, we have the ſame ſpirit of faith with David, David ſaid I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken; ſays the apoſtle Paul, The ſame ſpirit of faith is in us. Theſe are the things that are to be removed, when Chriſt as to heaven is come to be a new way; not that it is newly deviſed, nor newly revealed, nor newly uſed. It is called poſitively a new way,

1. Becauſe it comes after another, as the apoſtle teaches us to argue, Heb. viii. 13. *In that*, he ſaith, *A new covenant, he hath made the firſt old.* So may we ſay, when Chriſt is ſaid to be a new way, there hath been then ſome way before, that is now made void, and made void by it, as this was; there was a way by the firſt covenant, wherein ſinleſs man might have been ſaved and happy, this was a way God never intended to bring one man to heaven by, do not imagine, that God did ever deſign that which he never affected. When the Lord made the firſt covenant with Adam, he foreſaw the event, if I may ſo ſpeak, the firſt covenant was but a ſcaffold reared up a little while, that the glory of the new might be diſplayed; the firſt covenant was (1.) A covenant without a mediator, God and man treated immediately together; ſinleſs creatures made in ſo great perfection, as God made them, were in caſe, if I may ſo ſpeak, of treat-

ing with God. (2.) This covenant was made upon condition, that is to ſay, the bleſſings of that covenant were ſuſpended until the duty of that covenant was fulfilled. (3.) There were peremptory threatnings that did make all void, whenever it was incurred, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die.* Sin broke this quite to pieces, this covenant of works, this covenant without a mediator, this covenant upon conditions, this covenant that might be broken by ſin is altogether removed, and no man can ever get good by it; the bridge is quite broke down, but ſuch is the folly of this blind world, that multitudes will labour to build up this bridge again, whereas the day of our Lord, of a ſtorm will quickly diſcover how rotten it is.

2. It is called new, becauſe of its great light in the revelation of it under the goſpel, becauſe it is newly revealed in greater light than it was before. There is a pregnant place to this purpoſe, Heb. ix. 8. The apoſtle is ſpeaking upon the ſame thing that I am, *The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding.* Pray obſerve it, it is a great ſcripture, the Holy Ghoſt by theſe things taught the church of the Jews; the holieſt of all was a type of heaven, there was an entrance into this typical heaven for the High Prieſt, in the name of all Iſrael, the Holy Ghoſt ſignified to them, that there was a greater light to come in the way to heaven, but that the firſt tabernacle muſt be removed before that light come. How much does the apoſtle ſpeak, 2 Cor. iii. 6. to the end, of the difference betwixt the Old Teſtament and New Teſtament diſpenſation, he depreſſes the one, and raiſeth and exalteth the other greatly, both in the power and glory of the one beyond the other; let us now conſider this matter a little more narrowly, becauſe it is of conſiderable uſe for directing our path, in order to make us thankful for the bleſſing of our lot in the New Teſtament day; you heard there was a revelation of Chriſt, and the way

way to heaven, there were promises, there was worship, there was faith, and there was salvation under the Old Testament, but how vastly preferable is our state beyond theirs? (1.) As to the doctrine of Christ, see how the matter was discovered to Adam and Eve, He was to be the seed of the woman, that is all we find they knew, that was to break the head of the serpent; there was to be a child born into the world, that should defeat all that the devil had done in destroying mankind in the first brood. Our Lord Jesus was to Abraham the seed of the woman, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; to Jacob he was Shiloh, Gen. xlix 10, 11, *Binding his sole into the vine*, &c. and in Acts vii. 37. he is a Prophet raised up like unto Moses, as Moses foretold in Deut xviii. If we go further, he was to David the son of David. If we go on to the Prophets, Isaiah speaks greatly of him, chap. ix. 6. He was *to be a child given to us, a Son born to us, his name was to be called Wonderful*, &c. chap. liii He was to be *a man afflicted of God, he was to be slain*, &c. And Mic. v. 2. *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel.* These are several of the brightest dawnings of the light and the knowledge of Christ in the Old Testament, but pray what are all these to one word that John Baptist speaks, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29. And therefore he is greater than all the Prophets, that is, all the Old Testament Prophets, until the testimony of the apostles, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life*, 1 John i. 1. Thereupon it was that our Lord said, *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things*

which ye hear, and have not heard them; Matth. xiii. 16, 17. Certainly there was, if I may ſo ſpeak, a greater temptation unto the Old Teſtament ſaints, to deſire to ſee Chriſt in the fleſh, than there is to New Teſtament ſaints, to long impatiently for his ſecond coming. Surely the ſtrong faith of Abraham, that ſaw Chriſt's day near two thouſand years before he came, had great deſires to have ſeen him in perſon, and the Lord was pleaſed to gratify him in ſome meaſure, for even the Son of God in all appearance, did take on him the form of a man, in appearance, not really, not the nature of a man, but the form of a man, and did converſe with the prophets of old. The happieſt man that we find in the Old Teſtament, as to this point, was old Simeon. He was both an Old Teſtament ſaint and a New, he had it revealed unto him, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt. I only touch on theſe things, to ſhew that the doctrine of Chriſt is a great deal more clearly revealed to us, than to them; therefore the way may be called new. Next, as to their worſhip, they had in the wilderneſs a curious tabernacle, in Canaan, a ſtately temple, and there was a multitude of glorious ornaments in the outſide and in the inſide, there were courts, there were waſhings, there was incenſe, there was blood, ſprinkling with blood; and what ſignified theſe things? Since we have got *the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man*, Heb. viii. 2. We worſhip towards the true tabernacle, that their tabernacle was but a type of. How weak a type and reſemblance was that of a great houſe of threeſcore cubits long, twenty cubits broad, and thirty cubits high, 1 Kings vi, 2, *&c.* what ſort of reſemblance was this to a man like to this? But it was ſo, and all that they had. Our Lord is the miniſter of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man; all their waſhings and ſacrifices were but ſhadows of that, of which we have got the ſubſtance; theſe were all the *ſhadows of things*

things to come, but the body is of Chriſt, Col. ii. 17. So I may ſay as to their promiſes; they had promiſes, but there was ſomething of a veil even upon the promiſes of the old teſtament; a great many ſpiritual promiſes were veiled under temporal bleſſings. The apoſtle ſaith concerning them, *Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off*, Heb. xi. 13. That is the ſecond, the way is called new, becauſe it is of a new, lightſome, glorious revelation, under the goſpel. The apoſtle Paul ſaith, *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins*, &c. Acts xiii. 38, 39.

What great difference is there between Paul's preaching, and the bringing of a beaſt upon the altar? and the ſinner laying his hand upon his head, and the prieſt cutting his throat? What a poor thing was this, in regard of the plain goſpel-revelation of Jeſus Chriſt's ſacrifice?

3. It is ſaid to be a *new way*, becauſe it is newly and lately made: and the word in the original has ſomething in it, that favours this ſenſe. Some read it a *new ſlain way*. It is a way that comes by blood, that blood is newly ſhed; there is no abatement of the virtue of Chriſt's death, his blood is as warm, cries as loud this day, as the day it was ſhed: yet notwithſtanding, it had ſomething in it to work upon people the more readily, becauſe it was newly done at this time. Now, when we come to a matter of ſixteen hundred years, we are apt to think that the virtue is in a great meaſure impaired; but this is our ſin and folly.

4. It is a new way, becauſe it is always new and never gives place to another. It is never called old, for that which is old is ready to decay and vaniſh away; it is called new, becauſe there is never to be another way to heaven. People had need take heed how they improve this. *If we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins*, Heb. x. 26. A ſcripture

ture that, by the cunning of Satan, and by the darkneſs of the minds of many good people, has raiſed a ſtorm in many good people's conſciences without ground. The meaning is this, God will never provide another way to the end of the world, but this one way.

Laſtly, It is a new way, becauſe it is well prepared, as new ways uſe to be. In the order that God gives about the city of refuge, Deut. xix. 3, 4. *Thou ſhalt prepare thee a way*, ſays the Lord; thou ſhalt make a new way on purpoſe, a way that a man may eaſily find, a way that may be diſtinguiſhed from all other ways, that may direct itſelf to the paſſenger; whenever a man ſhould ſtand in need of the city of refuge, that he may find the way ready before him. Chriſt as ſlain as the new way to heaven, that is, well prepared, all impediments being removed out of the way, and all furtherances being in it; every thing that may hinder is removed, juſtice, the law, conſciſcience condemning, and ſin working; of all theſe we find plenty ſpoken of in the word of God. The Lord puts away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, he ſprinkles conſcience, and gives full aſſurances of faith; but ſome of theſe I have ſpoken to already. Only now a little of the poſitive furtherances that are in this way, or the properties of it, as it is a new prepared way.

1ſt, Chriſt Jeſus is a ſafe and ſure way, ſo that a man needs fear nothing, if he be in Chriſt: *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?* ſays the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 35. I know that they that are in Chriſt will fear often, but that is their weakneſs. It is a reflection on our Lord Jeſus, as to this ſure way to heaven, to have trembling travellers walking in it; people ſhould walk confidently, the way is ſure and ſafe. There are many enemies in it, that is certain; but they are not properly in the way, but are in our way as we travel in it; ſo that believers cannot walk quietly to heaven for them, but they walk ſafely for all

all that. The devil has been buſy for above theſe five thouſand years upon the road to heaven, yet he never ſlew one believer to this day. If a man be in Chriſt, the ark, he is certainly ſafe: he may be frightened, he may be diſturbed, he may apprehend danger, but he ſhall feel none.

2*dly*, This way is a well-provided way. If a man have a great way to go, if there be danger of his being ſtarved by the way, he is in a poor caſe; but there is no danger of being ſtarved, if we walk in Chriſt. Here, if I may ſo ſpeak, we may live upon the way; here is a cordial to the ſoul, food to the ſoul. Remember our Lord's body was given for us, his blood was ſhed for us; the eating his fleſh and drinking his blood, is food to the traveller in this way.

3*dly*, It is a very pleaſant way. All they that know it find it to be pleaſing both to God, and to his people. May we conceive, Sirs, how pleaſing it is to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to ſee multitudes of poor ſinners coming home to heaven in the arms and heart of his own Son? to ſee the ſtrayed ſheep come home upon the good Shepherd's ſhoulders? to hear him ſay, Behold, Here am I, and the children thou haſt given me? It is pleaſant alſo to all believers; there is no believer that uſually hath great trouble, but either when his intereſt in Chriſt is hid, or when his enjoyment of Chriſt is ſmall. When we know we are in him, and when we do feel the bleſſedneſs of being in him, it is not ordinary affliction that will work much upon the ſoul of a believer. With what contempt does the apoſtle ſpeak of all afflictions? *I know*, ſays he, *and am perſuaded, that they are not able to ſeparate me from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* He was walking in the way, and encompaſſed with the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus; therefore he gives a defiance to things preſent, and things to come, as not being able to hinder him from reaching to his journey's end.

4*thly*,

4*thly*, Chriſt is the way to heaven, and he is prepared as a near way. It is not far betwixt Chriſt and heaven; for as ſoon as ever a believer ſets foot in Chriſt as the way, he is immediately poſſeſſed of begun eternal life. We are to lay hold of eternal life; that eternal *life is in his Son*, and *he that hath the Son, hath life*, ſaith the apoſtle, 1 John v. 11, 12. Alas, poor people commonly miſreckon moſt wofully, that we are ſo far from heaven as from death and the grave; for though heaven's full enjoyment lies beyond both, and ſuch as be young may poſſibly be a good many years from heaven; yet if ſo be that you be truly in Chriſt, Chriſt is now in heaven, and heaven is in him: we receive eternal life by receiving him; we do not receive the full enjoyment of it, but we receive a right to it, and earneſt of it. It is a near way, for a man may ſee heaven when he is in the way. There is a promiſe in the prophet Iſaiah that has its veil on it: *Thine eyes ſhall ſee the king in his beauty, and they ſhall behold the land that is very far off*, chap. xxxiii. 17. All that I allude to is, that as ſoon as a believer by faith takes up Chriſt Jeſus as his Lord and Saviour, immediately he ſees the land that is far off; for there is no man can have a believing look of Chriſt Jeſus, but he muſt ſee heaven and ſalvation in his face. *We have acceſs*, ſays the apoſtle, *by faith into this grace, wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, Rom. v. 2.

SERMON

SERMON XV.

HEBREWS x. 20.

By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

THERE are two things, that if they were more upon our hearts and minds, would make both the speaking and hearing of this subject sweet and savoury. If our hearts were set on heaven, it would be delightful to hear of the way to it; and if our hearts were filled with love to Christ Jesus, his most lovely appearing would be very desirable; and the most useful and sweetest sight that believers can have of Jesus Christ, till they come before his throne, is to see him, as by his death and blood making his way to heaven for them. Christ crucified and Christ glorified is all that we are to study; the one we are to study as long as we are on earth, and the other we shall be admitted to study when we get well to heaven. It is upon this theme I have been speaking again and again, and, if the Lord will, shall do it yet farther, That Jesus Christ as slain is the way to heaven; or, That the flesh of the slain Son of God is the veil through which we must pass to heaven. This point I have opened in several things; and before I come to the large application of it that I design, I thought fit first to speak of the commendations of this way, that are in the text, and last day spake to the first of them, That it is called a *new way*, *new* not for its being newly contrived, for the contrivance of this way is as old as eternity; it was an eternal purpose, that God purposed in himself, about bringing the elect number of Adam's fallen seed to glory by

his Son Chriſt Jeſus. It is not new in the revelation of it; for it was revealed as ſoon as ſin came into the world, and ſin is as old as the world, within a week or little more. I mean ſin is as old as any creature is; it may be that ſin was on the ſixth day, or at leaſt on the ſeventh, it was very quickly. As ſoon as ſin came in, the revelation of this way comes in alſo. It is not new for the uſe and benefit of it; it is not this day, nor yeſterday, nor from the death of Chriſt, that believers get entrance to heaven, but from the beginning, from Abel the righteous, unto Zechariah that was ſlain betwixt the altar and the temple; and in all the old teſtament times, the acceſs to heaven was the ſame as it is now. Why then is it called a *new way?* It is neither newly contrived, nor lately revealed, nor lately felt in the profit of it. It is *new*, becauſe there was another before it; there was a way to heaven before it; but never man got to heaven that way and never man ſhall. God never meant that ever man ſhould perfect obedience unto himſelf by the terms of the firſt covenant; though life was promiſed by it, yet the leaſt diſobedience was threatened with death. It is new, becauſe it is ſo clearly and newly revealed in the goſpel; therefore the goſpel, in the declaration that we have of it, is called the *new teſtament*. It is new, becauſe it was but lately that this way was actually declared, and made known by the death of the Son of God. It is new, becauſe it is conſtantly freſh, and is never to give place to a ſucceſſor; as long as the world laſts, God will never contrive another way to bring men unto eternal life, but this thro' his Son ſhall remain for ever. If men ſin wilfully in the contempt of this, ſays the apoſtle, there is no more ſacrifice for ſin; God will never provide another ſacrifice for them that contemn this. It is new, becauſe it is well prepared, and made fit with all the encouragements that may be to the traveller. Of theſe things I have ſpoken already.

It

It remains, that I ſpeak of the ſecond property of this way, it is a *living way.* Chriſt ſlain as the way to heaven is a living way. Now, this is a more marvellous property than the former. Here is, in the preceeding verſe, a man whoſe blood was ſhed and all of it, and by blood ſhedding he was ſlain; in this verſe, here is a man whoſe life was taken away and his fleſh rent, ſo the word implies in the original, his body and ſoul were plucked aſunder by violence. That our Lord Jeſus as ſlain is the way to heaven, and a living way, is what we would inquire into the ſenſe of, and ſee what we are taught thereby.

1. Chriſt as ſlain is a living way to heaven, becauſe there was great life in his death, mighty power, mighty effects, it did great things. The apoſtle Paul was a great divine, you know; O what a bleſſing were it to the world, if there were but one man in it that knew Jeſus Chriſt but half as well as Paul did! Now, what was this great man's ſtudy all his life, but to know him? *That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death,* Phillip. iii. 10. Obſerve, every body knew as well as Paul, that Chriſt had died and was buried, that Chriſt had ſuffered and had riſen again; but, ſays the apoſtle, I do not ſtudy that, that I know ſufficiently; there is ſomething elſe about it, there is power and virtue in that death, and ſuffering, and reſurrection, that every day I am ſtudying more and more. See now how the apoſtle does moſt excellently and elegantly vary the word. The general word is, *That I may know him,* that is, Chriſt: the particulars are various; *that I may know his reſurrection, and the power of it,* that is one phraſe; *that I may know his ſufferings in their power,* is another; and the third is, *That I may know his death in being conformable to it.* The fellowſhip of his ſufferings, conformity to his death, and the power of his reſurrection, are but various words expreſſing the ſame great fruit, that the apoſtle aimed at in his know-

ledge of Jeſus Chriſt. When I am dead to ſin as he was; when I am like him in ſuffering and weanedneſs from this world; when I know his reſurrection, in being raiſed up to newneſs of life, as he was raiſed up, by the glory of the Father, to a new reſurrection. There was never a death in this world, that had life and power in it, but Chriſt's; God be thanked, death is the way to life, and we paſs through death into life; but there is no life in the death of martyrs, when ſlain for Chriſt's ſake, as Abel the righteous was; when they are dead, their blood cries for vengeance; but in the very death of our Lord there were great and mighty effects, there were great acts of life. I will name them for our ſtudy and uſe in our ſpiritual knowledge, for in this exerciſe of our faith ſhould be our daily employment.

1ſt, There was life in Chriſt's death, for by it he reconciled us to God. There is a great word to this purpoſe: *And having made peace*, ſays the apoſtle, *through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf*, Col. i. 20. The greateſt quarrel that ever was in the world, or ever will be, is that betwixt God and ſinners, taking up of which is the greateſt difficulty; the quarrel is juſt on God's ſide, for he is offended; the quarrel is unjuſt on man's ſide, for the fault is his; the parties are mightily unequal matched, the almighty God and a frail worm. But our Lord by death made up this quarrel, and there was no way of making it up but only this. Now, we commonly know this, and ſay it, that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; but this matter ſhould be diſtinctly known, and narrowly thought upon; we ſhould have our faith exerciſed ſo about it, as that we may be able to improve it a little. I would therefore ſhew you now, how Chriſt, by his death, reconciled us to God. He did this,

(1.) In that he ſatisfied divine juſtice by his death. There can be no peace betwixt God and men, as long as God's juſtice is demanding vengeance; as long as the

the justice of God has any thing to crave, there is no man can stand before him. Now, there are only two ways of satisfying divine justice, and there will never be a third. If all the devils in hell or men on earth should study to devise one, it will be impossible to find it. Divine justice is either satisfied by falling upon the sinner himself, or the surety for him: when justice falls upon the sinner, and exacts payment of him, the poor wretch must be perpetually paying, because he can never pay to purpose: a great reason why hell's torments are eternal, is, because justice can never get enough of them. But the satisfaction that justice got of our Lord Jesus, was full measure heaped up and running over; he offered himself a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour; justice was pacified and satisfied, and love got a vent towards men.

(2.) The law must be fulfilled before there can be any reconciliation with God. The law of God is not to be shifted off or put by; God's holy law is a perpetual bar in the way of all men to heaven, unless Christ remove it and take it out of the way. God's law demands a perfect obedience or death. Our Lord Jesus comes in and gives both, on the behalf of those that he redeemed; he was made under the law, and came under the curse, that we might receive the blessing, and that the curse might be diverted from us.

(3.) Sin must be taken out of the way. Justice was not only to be satisfied, and the law honourably fulfilled, but sin must be taken away, in order to our salvation and to our reconciliation with God. About this great work of our Lord, and that he did it by his death, the word speaks great things: *But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Hebrews ix. 26. He hath done it for ever; sin is sufficiently put away. But how is sin put away? Sin by Christ's death is not put out of the world, but remains still in the

world

world, and is greatly aggravated by Chriſt's death, *If I had not come and done amongſt them the works that never man did, they had not had ſin.* Small ſin gets great advantage this way, upon goſpel deſpiſers; Chriſt did not come then to put ſin out of the world, neither did his death put ſin altogether out of his people; where his death and the virtue of it is applied, ſin is ſubdued, but is not expelled. The Canaanites were worſted, but were not quite put out of their coaſts. Much leſs is ſin by Chriſt's death put away as to its vile nature, but remains ſtill where-ever it is, a vile loathſome thing to God; neither did Chriſt put away the deſervings of ſin, What then did he? Chriſt put away the condemning power of ſin, that it ſhall no more be an impediment to the peace and reconciliation of believers, therefore ſays the apoſtle, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. viii. 1. The ſecond word of Chriſt's death about ſin is, that *He condemned ſin*, he *condemned ſin in his fleſh*; ſin is a word that is too well underſtood even by thoſe that are unacquainted with both the Hebrew and Greek, all ſin requires a ſacrifice for its expiation, *He condemned ſin in the fleſh*; there is nothing more reaſonable in all the world, than for a poor creature to fear that ſin ſhould condemn him, that he ſhould be condemned for ſin, there is nothing more known in the ſcriptures than that Chriſt died for our ſins, then it would ſeem that ſin condemned Chriſt, how then did he condemn it? Let us conſider now for this where the ſtrength of ſin lies. The apoſtle tells us, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. That which makes ſin able to bind a man over to eternal vengeance, is the ſtrength and power of God's law, and God's law is as ſtrong as God himſelf, for almighty power is engaged to ſee the law fulfilled. Now when Chriſt engages with ſin's ſtrength, and hath overcome that, may it not well be underſtood, that he did condemn ſin? All ſin's power to condemn, is from the law, our Lord hath taken that out

out of the way, he hath ſatisfied it fully. The law demands blood for tranſgreſſion, it is granted, it is given, and blood of a high ſort, even the blood of the Son of God; ſo much for this firſt thing, *Chriſt as ſlain is a living way, for there was life in his death*, as appears in his reconciling us to God by his death. But never ſhall a man, to the end of the world, if it ſhould laſt as long as it hath already (and bleſſed be God, it ſhall never laſt long) get God's peace and favour, but that man whoſe peace with God was bought by this blood.

2. There was great power and life in Chriſt's death, in his overcoming the power of hell, he did it by his death. A great many words there are in the ſcripture about this, hell never did act more like hell, than in ſlaying the Son of God, hell was never ſo rampant as it was at that time, Luke xxii. 53. ſays our Lord, *This is your hour, and the power of darkneſs*, your ſad hour of temptation, the devil's great power is exerciſed now, Chriſt is taken, and to be condemned; it is ſtrange, if the devil were ignorant of the conſequences of this thing, he that entered into Peter, and got hold of his tongue to perſuade Chriſt not to go to Jeruſalem, where he was to die. Our Lord perceives the devil's hand in it, and calls Peter *Satan* for his pains; is it not marvellous now, that this wicked one ſhould have entered into the heart of Judas to betray him, and ſhould have ſtirred up the chief prieſts and people to cry, *Crucify him?* Like enough the devil thought he had done a greater exploit than in throwing down the firſt Adam, and what ſays our Lord concerning it? *Now is the judgment of this world: Now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out*, John xii. 31. Our Lord propheſied of his own death in theſe words, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*, John xii. 32. And in another place he tells us, *The prince of this world is judged*, John xvi. 11. This now we would conſider, what way this power of our Lord's

Lord's death appeared in the conquering of Satan, and in order to this, we would ſhew where Satan's armour lies, if I may allude to that word, for that word is ſpoken of the ſame wicked perſon, the devil, Luke xi. 22. *When a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoils.* Pray what is the devil's armour think you? Where lies his ſtrength? His ſtrength lies in ſin, which is his ſeed and off-ſpring; his ſtrength lies in the law, whereof he is the hangman and executioner; his ſtrength lies in the juſtice of God, wherein ſometimes he is the inſtrument, therefore becauſe of this, the apoſtle ſays expreſly, Heb. ii. 4. that our Lord took part of fleſh and blood, *that through death he might deſtroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.* How came the devil to have the power of death? According to his intereſt in ſin, according to his intereſt in the executing of God's vengeance, he has the power of death, but our Lord through death overcame him, Col. ii. 15. *And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* Though death and hell united their powers againſt him, he proved too ſtrong for them, and by dying overcame them. Hereby alſo he rent the vail betwixt Jew and Gentile, and becauſe the Spirit of God does expreſly and particularly mention it, therefore we may; it was a greater matter at firſt than now, through time, it is with Chriſtians; we do not ſufficiently ponder this great bleſſing: *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandment contained in ordinances, for to make in himſelf, of twain, one new man, ſo making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby,* Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16. When Chriſt died, the vail

of

of the temple was rent from top to bottom, Matth. xxvii. 51. Here now our Lord Jeſus his fleſh, was the vail that we muſt go to heaven by; when Chriſt the true vail was rent and died, immediately the typical vail was rent alſo, as if God had ſaid, Now let all men know, upon the death of my Son, that all the partitions betwixt Jew and Gentile are removed, but this was a great myſtery for a good while in the church, and Paul reckons upon his knowledge in this myſtery of Chriſt, Eph. iii. 4, 5. *Whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt, which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apoſtles and prophets, by the Spirit; that the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel.* So much for the firſt thing, Chriſt as ſlain, is called a living way, for there were great works of life even in his death.

2. He is the living way, becauſe all the life of man is lodged in him, whatſoever extent life is drawn to, whatever ſenſe we put upon this word life, as to all bleſſings for this and the other world, they are all contained together in Chriſt Jeſus, ſo contained in him as to be found no where elſe, he is *that living bread that came down from heaven, that gave his fleſh for the life of the world*, John vi. 51. The brazen ſerpent was a type of this, as the life of the ſtung Iſraelites ſtood in that ordinance of God, ſo the life of poor ſinners ſtands in this grand ordinance of God, his ſlain ſon. *The firſt man Adam*, ſays the apoſtle, *was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam was made a quickning ſpirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Surely all the natural life, that is in the world, of ſenſe, and reaſon, and underſtanding is derived from the firſt Adam, he hath made of one blood all nations upon the face of the earth; Adam appears to have been a very fruitful root, the world now for almoſt ſix thouſand years, has been filled with his off-ſpring, for of two there

ſprung all mankind that are upon the face of the earth; but, there is no quickning here, for all this. The ſecond Adam, ſays the apoſtle, was a quickning ſpirit to this mighty off-ſpring of the firſt Adam.

3. Chriſt is a living way, becauſe all that are in him, as ſoon as they are in him, live; that is one of the meanings of this word, there is no dead man can be in this way. Do not aſk the queſtion for it is a very idle one, Whether is a man quickened before he is in Chriſt, or whether he is in Chriſt before he is quickned? Neither the one or other, but both together, his life comes by being in Chriſt, how can men conceive of quickning now? Quickning is a work of God; can it be ſaid, that he quickens before we have life, or that we have life before he quickens? We can eaſily perceive, that we act life by his quickning, but the Lord quickens not a moment before we are alive; how did the Lord raiſe Lazarus? There went life giving power along with the word, by which life was received, and the voice was heard, as our Lord calls it; *the dead ſhall hear the Son of God, and live*, they muſt live before they hear, for hearing is an act of life, and they receive life by the powerful word of Chriſt.

4. He is a living way, becauſe he lives for ever to be the way; there is continual virtue in Chriſt's death, which perpetually iſſues forth, in order to the ſalvation of all his people; you would think it ſtrange, if one would aſk, What is heaven? What is eternal life? Why it is Jeſus Chriſt, that is eternal life, it is one of Chriſt's names. *And we know, that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him, that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life;* 1 John v. 20. This way lives for ever, to preſerve all his people, he lives *for ever to make interceſſion for them*, Heb. vii. 25. Nay, if I may ſo ſpeak, even in heaven, this way is not forgotten, I mean in the ſongs of the glorified, the

the song of the Lamb is perpetual. They sang the song of Moses and of the Lamb, what is in the song of the Lamb think ye? *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*, Rev. v. 12. Christ's blood in heaven, in the virtue and life of it, raises the notes of perpetual praises most highly. I know the book of the Revelation is a mysterious one, and every word of it is to be narrowly canvassed,-----*And in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain*, so that though there be no appearance, nor will be, of any infirmity that attended the low estate of the Son of God, when he dwelt in mortal flesh, yet there will be a perpetual remembrance of the dearest acts of his love, and richest acts of his grace towards us, in loving us, and giving himself for us.

5. It is a living way, for no man can die in this way; that way may be called a living way indeed, if there were such a one that led to a good place that no traveller in it could die, and would be a great temptation for people to undertake it. There are some places in the world where riches and honours are, that people run towards, and run through a great many dangers for; but they may die in that way, but never a man dies in this way, they sleep in Jesus, but die not. *I am the resurrection and the life*, says he, *he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die: Believest thou this?* John xi. 25, 26. O how sweet a question is that? *Believest thou this*, that a believer in Christ can never die? Wherefore now since our Lord died, death hath got a more sweet name, it is called sleeping, and sleeping in the Lord, thus it is said of Stephen, that he was stoned, calling upon God, and saying, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.----And when he had said this, he fell asleep*, Acts vii. It is called *sleeping in Jesus*, 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15. Do not you see, say you, that believers die like other men? Yes, but

then they die in Chriſt Jeſus, they only fall aſleep in the way, and the Lord, the way, will awake in a little while, and raiſe them up again, and bring them their new apparel, their houſe from heaven, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3.

Laſtly, It is a living way, becauſe the traveller muſt live upon this way; here is a marvellous living way, the traveller muſt live upon this way, he lives as ſoon as he is in it, and he lives as long as he is in it, for he cannot die in it, and he lives upon it, while he is in it; my meaning is, that all the fare that believers muſt cheriſh their new life with, is Chriſt himſelf; therefore our Lord ſpeaks of it ſo frequently, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*, John vi. 53, 54, 55. Bleſſed are they that can eat and drink plentifully of it, when the faint and weary traveller walks in Chriſt as the way to heaven, and has any thing that overtakes him, any faintneſs, any diſtemper that ſeizes upon him, nothing is he to do, but only to fall upon Chriſt by faith, and to live upon him, and to eat and drink this bleſſed way. This was Paul's life, *The life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, Gal. ii. 24. as if the apoſtle had ſaid, The ſtay of my life, the comfort of my life, the ſecurity and continuance of my life depends upon this, whenever I can get but a look, whenever I can get but hold of this love of Chriſt, that *loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, life, and ſtrength, and vigour return upon me: So much for this ſecond property of the way, that it is a living way; there was life in his death; all our life is lodged in it, aſſoon as we are in him, we live. Whenever a poor ſinner is drawn to Chriſt as the way to heaven, he comes and lives, and lives and comes, and comes by life, and lives by coming. Turn it which way you will, the truth lies equally ſure on all hands. This way is living, becauſe Chriſt as the way

lives

lives for ever; becauſe no man that walks in it, can die; and becauſe a believer can live upon this way, as long as he is in this world. Never bid better fare to a child of God, than more of Chriſt, more of the ſap and virtue of a crucified Saviour. If there were more of that among us, our ſouls would be more fat and flouriſhing.

A word or two only, at this time of application, before I proceed to the third property.

1. Is Chriſt a living way to heaven? Is a ſlain Chriſt for us, the living way in which we muſt walk to heaven? Then ſurely it ſhould be very pleaſant to the people of God to go to heaven. What is there to make it irkſome to a believer? What is going to heaven? It is nothing but walking in Chriſt towards Chriſt, to be ever with Chriſt; that is going to heaven; our way is walking in him, our way is walking towards him, our hope is to be ever with him. I know that there are a great many impediments and hinderances in the way, and yet theſe Chriſt has diſarmed and removed by his death; they may make an appearance that may be frightful to ſuch weak people as we be; weak believers take the ſhadow for an armed man, and are afraid many times unreaſonably; but how pleaſant will it be, I ſay, for a believer to find himſelf guarded from all attempts againſt him in his way to heaven? *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him*, Col. ii. 6, 7. Fix your root in him, and draw your fruit from him.

2. Is Chriſt a living way to heaven? Then what a ſorry pitiful caſe are they in, that walk in the ways of death, that deſpiſe this way of life? It is very common, and it does not ceaſe to be the more ſad, becauſe it is common, but is ſo much the more grievous, that perſons love death rather than life. The matter now is balanced thus: every ſinner is by nature dead in ſin; if he continues in that ſtate, he dies

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in his ſin, and dying in his ſin, he dies for ever, for his ſin: this miſerable caſe now is to be balanced with what our Lord proffers, that he will give the light of life, that he offers to lead men to heaven; that if they will but ſet foot in him, ſet their hearts on him, lodge their faith on him, and put all their truſt in him, he will guide them ſafe thither. You ſhould reckon it a mercy, that you have ſinners to preach to you; if it were not, that we have the experience of that rebellion of the natural heart in ourſelves, miniſters would be mighty impatient in dealing with ungodly perſons. What ails men, that they refuſe Chriſt Jeſus? What madneſs poſſeſſes the hearts of men, that they will rather go to hell, with the devil, than to heaven with Chriſt Jeſus? Do not they well deſerve to be in hell for ever, that make ſuch an abominable choice? Yet every natural man does ſo, every natural man prefers the way of death to the way of life, and prefers Satan's driving to hell, unto Chriſt's gracious and bleſſed leading to heaven.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

HEBREWS X. 20.

By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

I HAVE spoke, upon the 20th verse, of the way that is made to heaven, as the apostle does delightfully and wisely by the Spirit of God teach it; the various aspects as it were that Christ hath on our salvation, which we must have in our faith on him for salvation. I told you from this verse, that the way to heaven lies through the veil of the flesh of a slain Saviour, and this is the only way. I proposed to handle the properties of this way, before I came to the large application that so great a theme calls for. I have spoke of the first of them, That it is a new way, a new slain way. Last day I spake of this property of the way, That it is a living way. Jesus Christ as the way to heaven is a very great mystery; take but the words now as they are in our text. This sense of them is inseparable from them; and can there be any thing more mysterious than they do express, that a slain Christ is a living way for dead sinners to walk in unto eternal life? Who understands this? who believes this? I spake of the signification of this property at some length last day, how that Christ as slain is a living way to heaven. 1. In that there was life in his death. He was crucified through weakness, as to outward appearance of his low state; yet the great things that were done by that powerful death, are unspeakably mighty and many. He hath reconciled us to God, he overcame Satan, he overcame death in dying; death was never conquered until it got one man

man in its hands, that was our Lord Jeſus; and from that day to this, it is able to maſter none that believes on him, but muſt make an entrance for them to the heavenly kingdom. Death cannot ſtop a believer in Chriſt from going on to heaven, but rather it is made now one of the laſt dark gates that we muſt paſs through. 2. He is a living way, in that all the life of poor man, all ſaving ſpiritual and eternal life, is lodged in the Son of God: *This is the record that God hath given of his Son, that he hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son,* 1 John v. 11. There is nobody makes a queſtion of that, that calls themſelves by that common name of Chriſtians, that all life is from Chriſt; and there are but few, but know that all life is in him, and that men get life by being in him; that they have it when they have him. 3. He is a living way, in that, as ſoon as a man is in Chriſt, he is made alive. When that power of divine grace draws a poor wandering ſinner, and puts him in the way of Chriſt, he is made alive immediately to God. 4. He is a living way, becauſe he lives for ever. The virtue and ſavour of his ſacrifice is as freſh in heaven, as in the day wherein it was offered. 5. He is a living way, becauſe all that are in him ſhall live for ever; never can a man die in Chriſt. I know that we ſometimes uſe the word *dying* ſo frequently that this phraſe is common amongſt Chriſtians, *living in the Lord, and dying in the Lord;* but the new teſtament phraſe is fitter; believers in Chriſt only *ſleep* in the Lord: *They that ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. Laſtly,* He is a living way, becauſe the walker in Chriſt lives upon the way, the way is food to him. The ſame ſacrifice of atonement before God is made a feaſt for the believer. As under the law and before the law, in peace-offerings, by which covenants of peace were confirmed, there was ſome part thereof that was to be made a feaſt of; ſo this fleſh and blood of our Lord that is rent for us for a propitiation, is made a feaſt unto faith: *Except ye eat*

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the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, John. vi. 53.

The *third* property of this way remains now to be ſpoke to; that it is a conſecrated way: *By a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us.* The words as they run in the original have *conſecrated* before the other two properties, and may be equally fairly rendered, *which he hath conſecrated for us, to be a new and living way;* and that conſecrating relates not only to the ſubſtance of Chriſt's being the way, but to his being a new and a living way.

There are three things that I would diſcourſe to you from theſe words.

1. Of Chriſt's conſecration.

2. His own intereſt in it, his hand in it; ſo it is told us in the text, *By a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us.*

3. For whom it is that this way, this conſecrated way is; it is conſecrated for ſome body; it is conſecrated for us, for our ſakes, for our benefit, for our advantage.

Firſt, Of Chriſt's conſecration. This word *conſecrate* as it is in the Engliſh, is not in all the new teſtament, that I know of, but in this epiſtle; and it is twice in this epiſtle, though not the ſame Greek word in both places. See Heb. vii. 28. Conſecrate in the old teſtament is very frequent; and you know that the apoſtle, as hath been frequently obſerved to you, in this epiſtle, and particularly in that part of the epiſtle, has wiſely accommodated himſelf to thoſe he wrote to, who underſtood theſe words a great deal better than we do, for they knew well whence they were borrowed: they were borrowed from the temple, and tabernacle, and old teſtament worſhip, where conſecrating was uſed about every thing. Conſecrating is dedicating and devoting a perſon or thing to a ſpecial or holy ſervice; ſo we find conſecrating or dedicating of things and places. There was the book of the covenant, and there was the tabernacle, and

all the utenſils thereof, all of them dedicated with blood; and this ceremony in their conſecration was uſed, that, by being ſprinkled with blood, they were dedicated to the holy uſe and ſervice God appointed them for. So was it alſo as to perſons: we find it eſpecially concerning Aaron, the high prieſt, who was the firſt type, and concerning his ſons that were under him; they were ſeparated and ſet apart by divine appointment for a ſpecial uſe, none elſe were appointed for it; the ſenſe then of this word is, That Chriſt's conſecration is that, that he is devoted and appointed and dedicated to, for a ſpecial uſe, and that is, to be the way to heaven, that by him men may come to God; John Baptiſt underſtood this when he preached Chriſt, *Behold the Lamb of God*, ſays he, *which taketh away the ſin of the world*, John i. 29. Here comes the true ſacrifice, who bears the iniquity of his people. The apoſtle in Heb. ix. 22. makes a deep and excellent uſe of this conſecration: *Almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood;* purging there is partly in the ſame ſenſe with our conſecrating. *It was therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.* What were the patterns of the things in the heavens? The holieſt of all was the grand one; the high prieſt was a pattern of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the temple was a pattern of the heavenly things; yet theſe were but ſhadows of them; the things themſelves muſt be purified with better ſacrifices than theſe, even with the blood of the Son of God. We find therefore the truth of conſecrating, and devoting, and dedicating our Lord Jeſus to be the way to heaven; it is frequently in the word, and uſed upon many accounts. We will therefore take notice, that it is the Father hath dedicated him to be the way; for this is of great uſe in the exerciſe of our faith, to know our Lord Jeſus under this name, That he is the conſecrated way to heaven.

1. He

1. He is conſecrated by the oath of God; as in Pſal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.* And this the apoſtle diſcourſes of at great length in chap. vii. of this epiſtle, and makes one of the grand differences betwixt his prieſthood, and all that went before, to conſiſt in this, That they were made without an oath; hinting there was a time when they ſhould ceaſe: but when he made our Lord Jeſus a Prieſt, it was by an oath; which was a demonſtration, that he was to continue for ever in that employment. Therefore in the concluſion of that chapter, he ſays, *For the law maketh men high prieſts, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was ſince the law, maketh the Son who is conſecrated for evermore.* Take in this matter now by a true faith, and it may be that ſome time or other you will find food for your faith from it, That by the oath and appointment of Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt the Son is ſworn and appointed to be the only way to bring ſinners to glory.

2. Our Lord Jeſus is dedicated and conſecrated to be the way to heaven, by preparing him a body to ſuffer in. The covenant betwixt the Father and Son had all the bleſſings therein ſecured, by the mutual faithfulneſs betwixt Father and Son; but the way by which theſe were to be brought about, was the ſacrifice of the Son in man's nature; therefore his conſecration is carried on by his getting a human body: verſe 5. of this chapter, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body thou haſt prepared for me.* Did not God will and command ſacrifices? Yes, but never out of his Son Chriſt Jeſus; theſe were all but ſhadows and types of the great one, and there was no ſuch thing required of our Lord Jeſus, neither did he offer any ſuch thing; but, *A body*, ſays he, *haſt thou prepared me.*

3. By the commiſſion and charge that our Lord had for the ſetting about this great work of redemp-

tion. He not only had a body to ſuffer in, but was commanded by the Father to lay down his life for his people. This our Lord frequently takes notice of: *This commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 17, 18.

4. He is dedicated by the holy anointing. One of the grand ceremonies of conſecrating a perſon under the old teſtament, was by anointing. Aaron was to be anointed, and his ſons; when they came in to be prieſts of God appointment, they were God's anointed. And all this is typical of the true anointing of our Lord Jeſus. The anointing of Chriſt is the fulneſs of the Holy Ghoſt, and his pouring upon him: *Therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows*, Pſal. xlv. 7.

Laſtly, By giving him all power over all perſons and things, in order to the accompliſhment of his work. All judgment is committed to him: *As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him*, John v. 21. Matth. xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2.

Secondly, How is it that Chriſt hath a hand in his own conſecration? The word is, He hath *conſecrated himſelf to be the new and living way*.

1. Chriſt devotes and conſecrates himſelf to be the way to heaven, in a cheerful and willing compliance with all the will of his Father about him. In order to his being the way, the Lord God his Father opened his ears, and he was not rebellious; it was his delight to do his will; and in compliance with the divine will a great matter of his conſecration ſtood; by the which will we are ſanctified; the Father's will willing him to come, the Son's will willing him to come willingly.

2. By his dying. Our Lord Jeſus died willingly in another manner than any of us either can or ſhould. He laid down that life that he could keep, if he would; he laid it down as an act of great obedience unto the will

will of his Father; he died cheerfully, and died willingly. See what he says of it before-hand; *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth*, John xvii. 19. What is that sanctifying of himself? A sacrificing of himself, devoting of himself to be a sacrifice for the saving of his sheep. They could never come to that sanctification, by gospel-devotedness to God, unless our Lord Jesus had devoted himself to death.

Lastly, He consecrates and devotes himself by the consequent practice and exercise of his office. Every poor sinner upon whom our Lord Jesus puts forth his skill in saving him, is a display of his authority to save, is a further declaration of the power and might that he was clothed with in bringing men to glory. Therefore, says the apostle, *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*, Hebrews ii. 10. He was made perfect through sufferings to the end that he might bring many sons to glory; and the more he brings, this perfection is the more evident in him.

The *third* thing in the words to be explained is, For whom is this consecrating of Christ? The apostle says, he has consecrated this way for *us*, for a particular sort of people, for some of the children of men. Christ did not consecrate and make himself a way to heaven, and send the gospel into the world, that men according as they incline, and according to the direction of their free-will might come in and get life and salvation by him. Our Lord Jesus went about his work more knowingly, more fixedly than that; he knew what would come of it. It is done, I say, for particular persons. Consider, with respect to this,

1. That all the springs of salvation are towards particular persons.

2. That

2. That the covenant, the charter of ſalvation is with, and for, and to particular perſons.

3. The poſſeſſion of it, is by, and for particular perſons.

1. The great ſprings of ſalvation are all for particular perſons; the three grand ſprings of ſalvation, are the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the ſanctification of the Holy Ghoſt; now all theſe are determined towards diſtinct and particular perſons. 1*ſt*, The election of grace is upon perſons, there is no election of qualifications, the election is of perſons; where-ever it is ſpoken in the word, it is ſpoken of perſons, *He has choſen us in him before the foundation of the world. Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure. God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* The election is all of perſons.

2*dly*, The grace of redemption by our Lord, with his redeeming love, is of perſons, *He laid down his life for his ſheep*, and, *I know you are none of my ſheep*, ſays our Lord. That was a *not* Chriſt could ſpeak, but none of his ſervants muſt ever offer to ſpeak after him, never was there an apoſtle could ſay ſo in an aſſembly of people concerning one particular perſon, *I know they are none of Chriſt's ſheep*, that is only for the great ſhepherd to ſay. The chief ſhepherd can only tell his ſheep exactly.

3*dly*, The ſanctification of the ſpirit, which is the great ſpring of ſalvation, as it is begun in us, is of perſons; there is a devoting of the whole church, the body of Chriſt. But as it is a work on particular perſons, this work muſt paſs upon particular men, the ſprings muſt work in every man that is called to this ſalvation. *For we ourſelves were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.* So that we find, I ſay, that the ſprings of ſalvation are all about particular perſons, the ſprings run in one diſtinct channel towards particular perſons, and

and always anſwer the ſame; every one that is elected by the grace of the Father, is redeemed by the blood of his Son; every one that is elected and redeemed, is ſanctified by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghoſt. They are not equally viſible, but equally certain.

2. The charter of ſalvation is to particular perſons. Every one muſt have God's covenant made with himſelf; none are ſaved by a general covenant of God with a people; a church covenant under the goſpel ſignifies nothing at all, in matters of ſalvation. It may be of good uſe in church order. Every one in particular muſt have ſalvation come to him, through the channel of a particular covenant, betwixt God and him: *He has made with me*, ſays David, *an everlaſting covenant.* If it had been only with Iſrael in general, it had been a cold buſineſs for a dying man's comfort, but *he has made with me*, as particularly with me, as if there were not another man in all the world, that God covenanted with,

3. The poſſeſſion of ſalvation is by particular perſons; people are not ſaved in crouds and corporations. There are bodies of Chriſtian churches, as they are called, that are to attend to the means of grace and mutual edification, according to the Lord's appointment; but when we come to partake of begun, or of compleat ſalvation, every one muſt have it for himſelf, no other body's ſalvation can ſerve him. This is the ſubſtance of the meaning of this word, that our Lord as ſlain is conſecrated, and hath conſecrated himſelf to be the way to heaven for his people.

I would make ſome little uſe of this at this time, and reſerve the more general application of this ſlain Chriſt, as the way to heaven, unto another opportunity. Two things I ſhall infer from hence, and ſpeak to at this time.

1. Is Chriſt a conſecrated way to heaven, and hath he conſecrated himſelf for his people? Then *behold how he loved them.* If the Jews ſaid ſo of Chriſt's weeping

weeping at Lazarus's grave, what muſt we ſay of Chriſt's conſecrating himſelf to the death for us, that he might make a way to heaven for us? *Jeſus wept*, John xi. 35. The Jews ſaid, *Behold how he loved him.* We find moſt frequently in the word, when either this great devoting of Chriſt to death is ſpoken of in general as to churches; or applied in particular to particular perſons, it is ſtill aſcribed to love as its ſpring. *Husbands*, ſays the apoſtle, *love your wives, as Chriſt has alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it*, Eph. v. 25. *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, ſays the apoſtle, Gal. ii. 20. Great muſt that love be, when the love gift is ſo great. It muſt be a ſtrong love that gave ſo great a gift, *Who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5, 6. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead*, &c. 2 Cor. v. 14. This I would ſpeak a little to in a few particulars, this conſecrating himſelf to be a new and living way to heaven.

1ſt, Our Lord Jeſus did conſult the neceſſity of his people out of meer pure love. He was upon the Father's counſel from eternity about the way of ſaving man; he has the wiſdom of God, and hath an intereſt in the contriving of it; the eternal purpoſe was purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. The contrivance was, What way may poor fallen ſinners be brought well and ſafe to glory? They are fallen by ſin, conquered by Satan, proclaimed rebels by God, tainted and condemned by God's holy law, are beggered and impoveriſhed, and cannot pay a farthing to divine juſtice: The law muſt not be broken, juſtice muſt not be affronted, God's power cannot be reſiſted. How then can man be ſaved? It is impoſſible but only this way. Here is the myſtery of our Chriſtianity, it is impoſſible that a man can be brought up to God, until God come down to man, and become man for him; and that God-man is made the great mean to bring all his people up again to God. The ſacrifice of the

the man and the power of God, and the merit of that sacrifice of that God-man is made an everlasting chariot, that will carry all that believe on him certainly safe to glory; he consulted, I say, our necessity in great love. He consulted not his own conveniency at all, *Even Christ pleased not himself*, &c. O what an argument is here! The apostle brings the sweetest arguments sometimes to press the easiest ordinary duties. *Let us not please ourselves, but every one another, for edification*, that is wholesome advice, but the argument is beyond it, *even Christ pleased not himself.*

2*dly*, Our Lord's love in being thus a consecrated way appears in this, that he draws all his redeemed to himself. Christ being the way to heaven is no man's way till he be in it. No man is brought to heaven by Christ, till he be in him; therefore our Lord knowing this, draws them to himself. *And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me*, that is, all that I have laid down my life for.

3*dly*, This love appears not only in drawing them, but in preserving them to the heavenly kingdom. We do not fall out with ourselves so much as we ought, but we were in a bad case if Christ should fall out with us, as often as we do with ourselves. If the Lord Jesus had had the same thoughts of us, that we ought to have of ourselves, where had we been? But he pities and spares in his great love, and by his might keeps his poor people in the way, and gives them the crown in the end, Rev. ii. 7. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

Sirs, Christ's love is a blessed thing. If a poor believer can but see it through a glass darkly, and perceive something of the stream of it, he is joyful. But Christ's love as a Saviour will never appear in its glory, till the crown of glory comes out of his own hand. When a believer, if I may so speak, kneels before the throne of God and of the Lamb, and receives the crown of eternal life, our Lord may well say then,

Hereby thou mayeſt know how I have loved thee. Chriſt conſecrated himſelf to be the way to heaven, and a great demonſtration of his love we ſhould gather out of it. See Rev. iii. 9,

2. Did Chriſt conſecrate himſelf to be the way to heaven? Then ſurely men may boldly uſe him as the way; he is devoted for this end. There are two grand abuſes of conſecrated things, When they either are not uſed for that end they were conſecrated for, or when they are abuſed to another end,

Is our Lord conſecrated to be the way to heaven? Men muſt boldly by faith make uſe of him. See our Lord's own argument, John vi. 27. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you: For him hath God the Father ſealed.* He hath conſecrated him, ſet him a-part to be the bread of life, and giver thereof. This now I would only branch out in two particulars,

1ſt, Chriſt as the way to heaven maketh us bold in entering by him; he is conſecrated for this end. There is a boldneſs of faith, that in the day of God's power is practicable. At firſt believing ſome have found it. I will not ſay very many. The very firſt adventure of a ſinner, that has been deſpairing of all relief before, may truſt with great confidence upon Jeſus Chriſt, as the conſecrated way to heaven. But ſay you, I do not know that he has been conſecrated for me: I know he is conſecrated to be the only way to heaven; but is he conſecrated for me? I anſwer, (1.) No man ever did, and no man can, and you never will be able to know that Chriſt is conſecrated for you, till you be in him. This is the great wiſdom of God. God's great book of life, I ſay, is not to be read by any eyes, but the eyes of a believer; and when he reads the book, he can only read his own name in it. But indeed Paul, by an apoſtolic ſpirit and diſcerning charity, might ſpeak as he did, *Whoſe names are written in the book of life.* The book of

of election and the book of Christ's sheep, can be read by no eyes but the eyes of a believer; and this is enough, we need no more. It would be enough to confound all things in the church of Christ, if so be that the secret books of God's purposes were visible unto and legible by believers. If I may so speak, there would be no living in the world, if men knew who were elected, and who not. The very doctrine thereof you see how many tumults it raises; how much more would it be, if they saw the thing? Take heed, remember that Christ is consecrated to be the way to heaven; he is consecrated to be so for a particular number of men; no man can know himself to be of that number, but a believer, and every believer may. Whenever a poor creature can assure his heart before God, that he, in the sense and plain conviction of his deserving hell, and of his being utterly unable to do any thing to bring him to heaven, takes Christ as God's appointed way, and ventures his all upon the slain Son of God, this man is a believer, and the way was consecrated for him; as soon as he is in it, he may know it. Make but your calling sure, and you make your election sure thereby. (2.) Whatever darkness there be about this, whether the way was consecrated for you, you have encouragement to venture upon the way by all the scripture. It is not the doctrine of the purpose of God on the death of Christ, that is the ground of our faith; it is the doctrine about the sufficiency of Christ's death; it is the doctrine of the gospel, wherein the tender of the Saviour and great salvation is brought to every man's door so closely, that the issue must be either an acceptance unto salvation, or a refusal with the great aggravation of condemnation; and so will the judgment of the last day proceed.

2dly, In using Christ as the way to heaven, we must not only, because he is consecrated for this end, venture on him boldly, but we must walk in him confidently. (1.) Without fear of enemies; I do not say without apprehension; there is an apprehension

of enemies, that is an act of wiſdom, and faith, in order to prepare for the encounter. Take ye the whole armour of God; we have need of it, for there are great enemies; not fleſh and blood only, but greater enemies we have to fight with. Remember this, that you cannot get to heaven in that road that the devil does not haunt; there is no path lies to heaven that the devil cannot meet a walker in it. We muſt not expect to get to heaven without meeting him by the way; but let us remember this, I am upon conſecrated ground; if I be in Chriſt, Satan cannot prevail againſt me. And the more confidence we have of our ſecurity in Jeſus Chriſt, the more courage and ſtrength we have againſt Satan.

(2.) Fear not miſcarrying at laſt, if ye be in Chriſt. It is a pitiful caſe that a great many believers are in; there are believers, God help them, that are ſo weak, they believe all their days, and they unbelieve all their days; they walk on in Chriſt, and fear they ſhall never come to the end. What, art thou in Chriſt, and yet feareſt thy miſſing heaven? Whither can Chriſt the way lead a believer, but home to himſelf? *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: For thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world*, John xvii. 24. I will not loſe a bit of them, I will not loſe the man, notwithſtanding his temptations, corruptions, and weakneſs in grace. I will make the poor creature get good of all. It will be ſeen when our Lord has perfected his work, that he has loſt nothing of all that was given him.

Laſtly, Walk confidently in Chriſt, and do not fear wandering. Believers have the promiſe of the Spirit to lead them into all truth. If they be in Chriſt, Chriſt will keep them. I do not ſay, but many believers may be left to great miſtakes and errors about ſeveral things of ſmaller moment. But every believer that is in Chriſt, as to greater matters, is kept in the

the truth as it is in Jeſus. O that this were duly minded! How wiſely does the apoſtle ſpeak of this point, Eph. iv. 14, 15, 16. compared with ver. 19, 20. and onward to Col. ii.? The thing that I obſerve from both theſe places is, the inſtruction the Holy Ghoſt gives us of the ſpring of error in the church. The apoſtle cautions us, that we be not overtaken with the cunning craftineſs of them that lie in wait to deceive. How ſhall we know them? would the poor man ſay. Know them? Always by this, they do not hold the head, ſays he: *Not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God*, Coloſ. ii. 19. As long as a believer is in Chriſt as the way, he can never miſcarry, never wander totally; he may miſtake in ſomething in his way, but he is in the right way in the great matters of ſalvation, and ſhall be ſafely landed at laſt.

SERMON XVII.

HEBREWS x. 20.

By a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us, through the veil, that is to ſay, his fleſh.

THIS is the ſecond encouragement, that the apoſtle, by the direction of the Spirit of God, gives in encouraging Chriſtians to approach to God. They are all drawn from Chriſt Jeſus; and all our encouragements for faith are in Chriſt alone; nothing that is in him, but is encouraging to faith; and nothing that can encourage faith is out of him, or any where

elſe

elſe to be had. The firſt is, That there is an entrance allowed to us by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, verſe 19. The ſecond is, That there is a way prepared, and conſecrated for us through the veil; that is Chriſt too. And the third encouragement is, That we have an High Prieſt himſelf, ſet over the houſe of God.

Upon this ſecond encouragement from the 20th verſe, I have been ſeveral days ſpeaking upon this truth, That the way to heaven is through the veil of the ſlain Son of God, it is through the veil of his fleſh; and upon it, at ſeveral times, I have ſhewn what is meant by Chriſt's fleſh; it is his human nature offered in ſacrifice to God for the ſalvation of his people, with all its ſpirit, and power, and virtue. Next, I ſhewed, why this fleſh is called the veil. It hid and covered the glory of his Godhead, and yet makes a paſſage unto us by faith to approach to God; for an immediate approach to God, now that ſin hath entered into the world, is impoſſible; therefore all our approaches muſt be by a mediator, and this Mediator did mediate mainly by his blood and ſacrifice. What ſort of a way this is, has been ſpoke to, both in general, and according to the three properties of it in the text; That it is a new way, a living way, and a way of Chriſt's own conſecrating for us; and upon each of theſe ſome little application has been made ſuitable to the doctrine that has been diſcourſed to. I deſign now, as I promiſed, to make ſome more large application of this great truth, That our Lord Jeſus as ſlain is the way to heaven; though I know the apoſtle makes the grand application in the 22d verſe, for he points forth the uſe we ſhould make thereof, *to draw near to God.*

I will notwithſtanding, as the Lord ſhall help, ſpeak ſomething of application previous unto that; and it ſhall be only in two particulars.

Firſt, If Chriſt be the way to heaven, we may plainly ſee how fatally and wofully the greateſt part of

of the world are mistaken about the way; and if mistaken about the way, they must miss of the end. If one do not take the right way to heaven, he can never come at it. This is an inference that is very plain, and very sad. There are two false sorts of religions in the world, I mean that almost all the rest are reducible to two. There is natural religion; and there is the Antichristian one, which is but a grand corruption of Christianity, and changing of it some way into the old Pagans natural religion, and many gross things therein. I would speak but briefly unto both of them, and reduce what I mean mainly to warn you of, as inferences from thence.

1. There is natural religion. I call it by that name, because something of it is every where, and it is only what remains in that fallen state that man is come into. We will see now what this is made up of, what are those principles that are so deeply engraven in the hearts of men, that they do fill all the inhabitants of the earth with some form of religion. Where-ever travellers have come, and observations have been made, among the most savage people, there is something left of some notions of religion; forms of it, though very sorry ones they be, it is acknowledged. You had need consider this, for this kind of religion is in every one of your hearts; but unless the grace of God, and the light of the gospel expel it, and plant something better in its room, you are lost for ever. Natural religion has in it these particulars.

1*st*, Some notion of the being of a God, that there is a God, and that this God is to be worshipped, and served, and obeyed. All the world own something of this. *The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*, Rom. i. 20. There is nothing more invisible than the Godhead; eternal power is also invisible: but, says the apostle, the very Heathens have these things made visible by the mighty

mighty works of God; and their natural reaſon can inſtruct them ſo far, that the rearing up of this glorious canopy of the heavens, the frame of the earth, the making of theſe great ſeas, and the making of ſo many beautiful creatures upon the earth, muſt be the work of ſome great, powerful, wiſe agent. Atheiſm is againſt nature, and is no where found, but where the principles of natural religion are extinguiſhed by the power of the devil, and the juſtice of God by mens abuſe of revealed religion. When men come to ſtruggle with the right way of the knowledge of God revealed in the word, and ſhut their eyes againſt that, God ſuffers them to be blinded, as to thoſe things that the very Heathens have more light in. I believe that there are more Atheiſts in England, than among all the Pagan nations through the whole earth. A place where the goſpel-light doth ſhine, and men rebel againſt it, is the only place where ſuch monſters are bred.

2*dly*, In natural religion, there is always ſome diſtinction made about good and evil, ſome light about good and evil, and ſome conſcience there is exerciſed about theſe. Conſcience is as natural to us, as underſtanding, and will, and memory are. It is as natural to us to have a conſcience, as it is to be men and women, or to have reaſon; for conſcience is nothing elſe but the exerciſe of reaſon about the greateſt concernments; it is only a man's judging himſelf, according as he ſtands before a greater and ſupreme judge. Therefore the apoſtle ſpeaks thus of the Heathen: *Theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves: which ſhew*, ſays he, *the work of the law written in their hearts*, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Pray obſerve, one of the grand promiſes of the new covenant, is God's writing his law in our heart. Here the apoſtle ſpeaks of the law of nature, as written in the heart of a Heathen, *their conſcience in the mean while*, ſays he, *accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another*, according to the light that they receive.

3*dly*,

3*dly*, There is amongſt all natural men, and a natural religion, ſome notion of forgiveneſs, and pardoning mercy and goodneſs in God. Amidſt all their darkneſs about God, yet they do know, that it is a great excellency, and all excellencies they will aſcribe to God, to be good and gracious, and ready to forgive. As there is a conſcience of ſin amongſt all men, ſo they do give this praiſe to God, that he is a God that can forgive; thereupon they addreſs to him, in their ſeveral ways, for it. All the Heathen have ſome ſenſe of judgment to come; and from theſe principles all the fabrics of natural religion are reared up in the world. Now, where this natural religion comes to be poliſhed by the light of the word, it will look a great deal better, and a great many are deceived by it.

What then are the grand wants and defects that are in a natural religion, which muſt certainly leave a man that has no more, in a condemned ſtate?

(1.) With all their light, and all the knowledge they have of God, they do not know the true God; they do not know the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they do not know God in Chriſt. All gods not ſeen in Chriſt are the idols of the nations. It is a deep word that the apoſtle has, *For after that in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*, 1 Cor. i. 21. All their wiſdom could not bring them to know God, becauſe they did not know God in Chriſt.

(2.) All natural men, whatever thoughts they may have of God's goodneſs in ſaving and forgiving, yet know nothing of God's way of doing it; and if they do not know of God's way of doing it, how can they come by it? They do not know God's forgiving thro' a ſatisfaction, they do not know of God's ſaving men by a mediator; and a great many that hear of theſe things every day, ſeem to know it as little as they; I mean, though they ſubſcribe to the notion, the

power of the truth is as little upon their hearts as upon the Heathens. Therefore all this natural religion, that fills the nations of the earth, is nothing but a dark and dim light, a falſe fire that leads men into the pit, and never did lead a man to heaven; for no man can be made wiſe to ſalvation, but by the revelation of the word of God; and no man can ſavingly know the word of God, but by the revelation of the Spirit of God.

2. The ſecond great religion that fills the world is Popery, as we commonly call it, Antichriſt's religion. They call it the way to heaven; but the word of God calls it *the myſtery of iniquity*, and the head of it, *the ſon of perdition*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3. and *man of ſin*. The ſpirit of Popery lies in this, in inventing, deviſing, and impoſing of falſe ways to heaven. All their ſeveral religions, as they call them, are but ſo many ways to lead people from Jeſus Chriſt. There is a way to heaven that they propoſe by the merit of good works, ſometimes by our own, and ſometimes by thoſe of others: there is a way to heaven by the interceſſion of ſaints or angels, thereupon they pray to them, and expect relief from them; there is a way to heaven in that pardon that they ſtand much upon, and that is by the abſolution of a ſinful prieſt like themſelves. Really it is amazing to behold the judgment of God, that ſo many of the wiſe, and prudent, and great, of the kings, and princes, and learned of the earth, have been ſo long bewitched with theſe ſorceries. They have another way to ſalvation which is yet worſe, and more dangerous becauſe it comes nearer the true one; and that is, their carnal repreſenting the true way to heaven, that is, Chriſt crucified. Here lies a great part of the myſtery of Antichriſtianiſm. If ſo be that this were laid quite aſide, that Chriſt is the way to heaven, Chriſtianity were firmly and in plain terms laid aſide; therefore they are left to be ſo groſs in their life to ſerve their deſign. In the mean time, Antichriſt does ſo paint

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forth and repreſent Jeſus Chriſt to poor people, that quite enervates and ſpoils all the virtue of this great contrivance of God. There is repreſenting him by an image and picture; they worſhip the picture of a man extended upon the croſs, and this is called by them their ſaviour; but the Spirit of God calls it a devil; for every image or every creature that becomes the worſhip of man in the ſtead and room of God, is called worſhipping of devils, worſhipping of ſtocks, and ſtones, and devils. Another groſs abuſe of Chriſtianity is this, that is reckoned one of their great ways to heaven; and that is, they turn the memorial of the death of our Lord, that is to be perpetually kept up in the church, into a propitiatory ſacrifice for the ſins of the quick and dead; beſides the other abominable things that are therein, is that of tranſubſtantiation. But that which ſerves my purpoſe is mainly the ſacrifice of it. The deſign of our Lord Jeſus in appointing his laſt ſupper was, that bread might be eaten, and wine drunk amongſt believers in the churches of Chriſt, in the remembrance of Chriſt's death, till he come again; a plain naked teaching thing, and has its own ſignification in the inſtitution of it. Inſtead of this, they have the bread turned, as they fancy, into the fleſh and body of a man, and this body eaten; and this they reckon the way to eternal life, when the abuſe of it is a ſin, enough to damn men. But now, ſay you, what does all this ſerve for? We are neither Pagans nor Papiſts. But notwithſtanding there is not one of you, but are in ſome danger this way; for, from a mixture of natural and antichriſtian religion, there ſprings up a great many ſorts of people among us.

1. There is the ſuperſtitious formaliſt. Theſe are in all ſorts of religion. They imagine, that becauſe they are in the true church, therefore they ſhall be ſaved. The true church is not the way to heaven, but Chriſt is the way to heaven; and all that are in

Chriſt will betake themſelves to that church that is true. They commonly lay a great ſtreſs upon their outward performances and duties, and many times on the ſmalleſt.

2. There is the moraliſt. Would any believe it, unleſs they read it in books and in ſome mens preaching, that in ſuch a land as England is and has been, there ſhould be in it either man or woman, or child of ſeven years of age, that ſhould drink in this dreadful notion, that if I do juſtly, and do as I would be done by, I ſhall ſurely be ſaved? But thou ſhalt ſurely be damned, if thou doſt no more. Is not this a wonder, that after all that light that has ſhone from the word of God about the way of ſalvation by the ſlain Son of God, that civility that is to be found amongſt Heathens is all a great many have for their title to eternal life!

3. There is the ſelf-righteous legaliſt; a man that goes beyond the former: he will not ſtint himſelf in the matter of his ſalvation, and lodge it in the form of his profeſſion, but will bring it farther to the exerciſe of his conſcience, and the employment of his heart about good works, about ſtriving to pleaſe God; he is about eſtabliſhing his own righteouſneſs, and he will find out a way to heaven for himſelf. Much is ſaid againſt this in the word of God, and much ſhould be daily ſaid againſt it by the miniſters of the word. There are ſome men ſo impatient in hearing any ſpeak againſt ſelf-righteouſneſs, as though it were not a ſin, and no-body were in danger to be ruined by it; when it is the ſin that is the laſt ſtrong hold of Satan, and that keeps many men in, that the word of God hath ferretted out of others. What can be the grand reaſon of this, that men ſhould fall into ſo many fatal miſtakes about the way to heaven? I do not ſpeak of them that want the light of the word, nor of Popery; but that there ſhould be ſo many of theſe remaining miſtakes where the light of the word is, is ſtrange. The reaſon is only this, the great darkneſs that

that men naturally labour under as to the way to heaven; this darkneſs leads men to miſtake it, and to take up other ways, becauſe they do not know the true way. Every body thinks that it is very hard to get to heaven, and it will coſt a great deal of time and pains, and ſtruggling before they get thither; but here is the miſchief of it; people do not know it is hard to know the way to heaven, they are not convinced of this, that unleſs a beam of light ſhine in upon thy heart, thou mayſt hear of the way to heaven all thy life long, and not know it. There is the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, that every one had need to pray for. I might inſtance a great many of the ordinary ſimple miſtakes of people. Some do imagine, that any way that is contrary to the way to hell, is the way to heaven; a great miſtake. Every ſin is the way to hell, will you ſay, every duty is the way to heaven. Any ſin may ruin a man, but nothing can ſave him but Chriſt Jeſus. Intemperance, drunkenneſs, *&c.* is the way to hell; but is there any ſo unreaſonable as therefore to think, that ſoberneſs is the way to heaven? It is a duty, it is that which God commands of them that are in the way; and ſome imagine, that what every one that is in the way to heaven does, is the way. But the way to heaven ſtill is through Chriſt himſelf; for though all this walking is to be in the way, yet walking is not the way; we are to walk in holineſs, but this is but our walking in the way of Chriſt; none can walk in him, but they are ſanctified; and the more they are ſanctified, the more they partake of him. That which is reckoned a very abominable hereſy amongſt the Socinians, is indeed that which is very natural amongſt many that would be reckoned good Chriſtians, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt came to ſhew the way to heaven; but they do not believe, he came to be the way to heaven; they think he came to tell us the way to heaven, and to make a way for

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us; but they cannot underſtand, that he came to be the way to heaven, that we cannot get to heaven unleſs we be in him. So much for the firſt, That the way to heaven is through the vail of the fleſh, of the ſlain Son of God. There are many in the world that are moſt wofully and fatally miſtaken, and we may make uſe of our Lord's words and arguments in this point: there are few that find this way, *Broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat*; why ſo? *Becauſe ſtraight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*, Matth. vii. 13, 14.

The *ſecond* word that I would give in application of this truth, That Chriſt as ſlain is the way to heaven, ſhall be in exhorting of you to take this way. Labour to be acquainted with a crucified Saviour. The apoſtle Paul was a better preacher than any one in England: He determined to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified, and he knew his work, he knew wherein profitable preaching lay. You muſt labour, I ſay, to be in him; ſee that you be in the way. This I would exhort unto, and inforce upon you in a few things, if the Lord give them force, for it is in his hand only.

1. Conſider and be ſerious in this matter, whether you have a mind to be in heaven or no. Sirs, miniſters are deceived wofully here; we expect when we come to preach to people, and ſtudy for them, and pray for them, we expect the company has a mind to go to heaven; but the matter is otherwiſe. A great part of our work is to perſuade people to have a mind to be in heaven; but if you have a mind to be in heaven, have you ever been at that queſtion; *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Would you pretend to be Chriſtians, or, for God's ſake, would you have any to think you Chriſtians, that have not come this length, Oh what ſhall we do to be ſaved? Do you think that, any man will ever come to heaven, that never thought of

of it before he came thither? How God deals with infants, we do not know, but for persons that live under the means of grace, the salvation of folks that are mindless of salvation is impossible. God never designed it, and will never perform it. This is the first consideration. Enter into your own hearts, and think with yourselves, what an answer ye can give to so plain a question as this is, Is hell the most unholy and unhappy place of all? Is heaven the holiest and happiest place of all? Is it lovely above all other lovely things to you? Then here is the way to it: Labour to get into Christ Jesus.

2. Consider, that if you have a mind to be in heaven, you must be in that way wherein you may be safe against all that can assault you. Have you a mind in earnest to be at heaven, to be surely there? You must be in that way wherein you may be safe against all assaults from enemies; you must be found there where you shall be surely safe. This made the apostle Paul so desirous to be *found in him*, I fear nothing, if I be found in him, Phil. iii. 9.; found in him, there lies the business. I shall but run through, and name a few of those difficulties that you will have to encounter withal, and that you can be no way secured against, but by being in Christ as the way.

1*st*, You have the world to oppose you; and the world is too hard for any man that is out of Christ. The world has been too hard for a great many that thought themselves strong enough for it; its cunning, its wiles, its violence, its temptations have overcome a great many. There is no overcoming the world, but through him that has overcome it for us, John xvi. 33. We have the devil to oppose us, and we must be in that way, wherein we can be safe against him. If you be in Christ, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you: *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*, 1 John iv. 4. You had need to be in that way, wherein you can give an answer to your consciences. How needful is it to have

have ſomething that can ſtop the mouth of the moſt craving clamorous conſcience, that can anſwer it ſatisfyingly. So that it ſhall ſpeak no more! What can that be, *The anſwer of a good conſcience towards God, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. People will imagine now that the grand ſecurity is the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God, as to our converſation, heart and way; that indeed has its own uſe and an inferior uſe; but when men come to reckon with conſcience, truly there is nothing but the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus upon it, that can make it good. But here is more, I will not ſay worſe, but more dreadful than all this; God's holy nature, God's holy law, God's ſpotleſs juſtice, they will appear againſt you in the way to heaven; unleſs you be in Chriſt the way, there is no ſtanding before theſe. When a man is in Chriſt he has a ready anſwer, I do not fear God's holy nature, for he hath provided a Saviour; I do not fear the law, Chriſt, in whom I am, has fulfilled it; I do not fear the juſtice of God, for Chriſt has ſatisfied that to the full. When death, judgment, and awful eternity ſtares a man in the face, he had need be ſure that he is in Chriſt. Death, that is the great terror to all natural men, to a believer it is looked upon as overcome by Chriſt. This is the great comfort of a believer, I know I muſt die; but Chriſt has died, and has overcome him that had the power of death. And why ſhould a believer be afraid of judgment, who is in the way, walking towards him who is the Judge? *We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. v. 10. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.* Do you think that a man that is in Chriſt, has reaſon to be afraid to ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt? No; a believer reckons thus with himſelf, He that ſpared not his own Son, the Son that ſpared not his own blood, will he not give a favourable ſentence in that day? And for eternity, that endleſs awful thing, that we can never fathom in our thoughts,

thoughts, the believer looks upon it as a very amiable thing: This eternity that confounds other folks, to the believer is the great joy of his heart; for there, and through all the ages of it, will he be with the Lord, praising him, enjoying his company, and partaking of his fellowship. This is the second consideration, You should be sure, I say, to be in Christ the only way to heaven, where you may be safe against all you can encounter with. Whenever people come to have an awful prospect of these things, of God's holy nature, law and justice; of death, judgment, and eternity; when their consciences are truly awakened, all the fig-leaf coverings that men used to cover their nakedness with, are all blown off. It is only mens trifling thoughts of heaven, and of these awful things that make Christ so much despised.

3. Consider this, what a great sin it is, how extraordinarily damnable and damning, to neglect Christ as the way to heaven; a sin, as our Lord seems to call it the only sin: *If I had not come*, says he, *and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: But now they have no cloke for their sin.* They had been an innocent kind of people, if Christ had never come amongst them: John xv. 22. 24. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* Christ came into the world, lightening them in the way to heaven, and they will not make use of him. There are three most sacred things; and whosoever stumbles at any one of them, is broken in pieces, if they stumble finally at one or at all. The first is, The rich grace of God the Father, in providing the way to heaven by his Son. The second is, The blood of the Son of God, that made the way to heaven. The third is, The gracious strivings of the spirit of grace in the gospel, to bring men to walk in this way. Whoever they be that live and die under the gospel, and do not make use of Christ as the only way to heaven, they are chargeable with all these; they frustrate the

grace of God; they trample upon the blood of Chriſt; and do violence and deſpite to the ſpirit of grace; which are the higheſt expreſſions of wickedneſs that are in all the Bible, though I know the higheſt degree of them is applied to the grand unpardonable ſin.

Laſtly, Conſider, that all excuſes are taken off. Nothing can juſtify a man in refuſing to betake himſelf to Chriſt as the way. The Lord has provided and framed the goſpel, by which he deals with men ſo, that they muſt be rendered inexcuſable, that do not embrace it, and venture on Chriſt offered therein. For conſider, the light of nature makes men inexcuſable, the light of God's law ſtops mens mouths, and all the world are guilty before him. The light of the goſpel is alſo framed ſo, that it much more ſtops all mens mouths, and provides an anſwer for every thing. And indeed men are very fruitful in theſe objections: "I am a ſingular ſinner, therefore I dare "not venture to come into Chriſt as the way to hea-"ven." What ſort of an objection is this? Art thou a ſingular ſinner? Why, Jeſus Chriſt is a ſingular Saviour; let that ſtand againſt that; and his buſineſs was with ſinners; he came into the world to ſave ſinners; and all ſinners that are in the world, and hear of him, ſhould come to him for ſalvation, then there is a happy meeting. "I am a vile ſinful creature." What then? We are called to come to a fountain that is opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs, if I may ſo ſpeak: Come in filthy, and go out clean, *Come now and let us reaſon together,* ſaith the Lord; *though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow, though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool,* Iſa. i. 18. What reaſon has God to argue thus with poor ſinners? That he ſhould reaſon thus with unreaſonable ſinners? That he ſhould freely offer his pardoning mercy to thoſe, that are altogether undeſerving of it? As if God ſhould ſay, I know all that you can ſpeak muſt only be from your ſins; I know them better than you do; come hearken to me, take

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my counſel, your ſins ſhall be no hindrance, they ſhall be removed quickly. But ſay you now, what ſhall a poor creature do that would be in Chriſt as the way to heaven? He is ſenſible that he muſt be in him, how ſhall he do to get into him?

Firſt, Be willing to be taken by him. All that are ſaved are begun to be ſaved when Chriſt begins to lay hold of them. The firſt act that is upon a ſinner, is of Chriſt's putting forth: *That I may apprehend that*, ſays the apoſtle, *for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* I was a poor wandering creature, as if the apoſtle had ſaid, one time and for a long time; but at laſt, Chriſt laid hold of me. He remembered time, and place, and day, as long as he lived. *Believing* is ſometimes denoted by the name of *coming*, ſo it be by him. Would you be acquainted with Chriſt Jeſus, and be in him as the way? Reſolve to ſay thus much, Though I cannot climb to Chriſt Jeſus, and though I cannot find him; yet by God's grace, I will not run away further from him, I will ſtay and long for his laying hold upon me. The miſery of people is this, they are conſtantly ſtriving againſt Chriſt's ſaving of them. Whenever a poor ſinner is broke as to this reſolved reſiſting of the grace of God, grace does overpower him immediately. Be therefore willing to be taken by him.

2*dly*, It is a hard matter to look on Chriſt Jeſus and be ſaved? A man may look on one that he cannot come to. Look upon him as the way. If people do but get a view of Jeſus Chriſt as the way to heaven, their hearts will follow their eyes immediately; but this eye to ſee him is of his own giving; and he has an eye-ſalve to give to make us ſee, as he promiſes, Rev. iii. 18.

3*dly*, Love Chriſt as the way to heaven, and you ſhall be in him: nay, you are in him, when you love him. It is impoſſible, that a man that loves Chriſt Jeſus, ſhould ever go to hell; it is impoſſible, that ever a man

can love Chriſt Jeſus, but one that is beloved of him. But now the love of Jeſus Chriſt, though it be the moſt ſenſible of all graces, it is very hard to own it, becauſe believers would fain love him more and better; they cannot tell how to own they love him at all. I would aſk you but one queſtion, Can you read, and ſeal, and ſubſcribe your name, and put your *amen* to two verſes in the Bible? I dare warrant you your eternal ſalvation, if you can do ſo. The firſt is a dreadful word. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be an anathema, Maranatha.* Amen, ſays the poor believer; if God curſe him, it is no wonder. What, not love the Lord Jeſus? The other is, Rev. v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.* Amen, ſays the believer. That heart I ſay, that is taken up with the love of Chriſt Jeſus as the way to heaven, that is bent to his praiſe, is one that is in him.

4. If you can truſt Chriſt Jeſus as the way to heaven, you are in him. Do you know what truſting is? You know what it is in matters of money and trade; it is juſt the ſame thing in matters of your ſalvation. Do you know in whom you have laid your great ſtreſs, of bringing you to heaven? Say to yourſelves, I do not know a better hand in heaven or earth to lodge my immortal ſoul in, than in Chriſt Jeſus the Son of God. We come to him by faith, and we go on in him by truſting: *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded, that he is able to keep that, which I have committed unto him againſt that day.* I know my friend, would the apoſtle ſay, and I am ſure he will give a good account of all I have truſted him with, 2 Tim. i. 12.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

HEBREWS x. 21, 22.

And having an high prieſt over the houſe of God: let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.

APPROACHING to God is a very awful and dangerous thing. Many are undone thereby, as truly, as readily, as the poor curious priers into the ark were. There is nothing more common in people's practice, eſpecially amongſt us, than forms of approaching to God; little fear upon mens hearts in the work, and little profit by it. There is need of great encouragement unto a ſerious and ſenſible perſon to ſupport his heart in drawing near to God. The prophet brings in men in diſtreſs ſaying, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God?* Micah vi. 6. Where the majeſty of God is ſeen, and our own vileneſs ſeen alſo, it muſt be a great thing that can encourage ſuch a creature as a ſinner is, to approach to ſuch a God as our God is. All the encouragements for approaching to God are in Chriſt Jeſus, and from him; every thing that is in him is encouraging, and every thing that is revealed of him is encouraging, and there is no encouragement elſewhere to be had. Our apoſtle is here taking ſeveral views of Jeſus Chriſt, with an eye to this ſcope, to encourage us to draw nigh to God. We have ſpoke to two of them already.

1. As his blood makes the entrance to the holieſt,
2. As his ſlain body is the veil we muſt paſs through.

We

We now come to the *third* encouragement, which is taken from Jeſus Chriſt, with reſpect to his grand office of being a Prieſt: *Having an high prieſt*, ſays the apoſtle, *over the houſe of God.* He doth not name who this high prieſt is, neither needed he, for he had ſpoken ſo much of him before, that none that read this could doubt that this high prieſt, though unnamed, is Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

In theſe words are three things, I would take notice of, and ſpeak to in order.

1. The name of the office of our Lord; he is an *High Prieſt*, and expreſſed in a ſingular manner. An high prieſt we read it; but the word in the original is not *an high prieſt*, but *a great prieſt.* It is not the uſual Greek word that the apoſtle uſes in this epiſtle frequently, when he ſpeaks of Chriſt the High Prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec, chap. vi. 20. and ſeveral times in chap. vii, viii, and ix. It is a ſpecial phraſe here: he is a great Prieſt; there is ſomething very ſingular in it, ſomething above all that we can conceive.

2. Where his charge lies. Says the apoſtle, He is *an High Prieſt over the houſe of God.* The houſe of God, in the new teſtament phraſe, has two proper ſignifications. (1.) The things that pertain to God, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, Heb. ii. 17. *That he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining to God. Every high prieſt taken from among men*, ſays he, *is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God*, chap. v. 1. (2.) God's houſe in the new teſtament, and in this epiſtle, is God's church and people, that is, believers. So the apoſtle explains it, chap. iii. 6.----*Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* He is a Son and Lord over his own houſe; *whoſe houſe are we*, ſays he. So the church is called *the houſe of God*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Hereabout then lies the charge of our Lord as Prieſt; it is in things pertaining to God, for his people: this is a matter that is

to

to be frequently and ſeriouſly minded, for it is of great uſe for the directing the exerciſe of our faith. Ye all know that our Lord Jeſus, in his great work of Mediator and Redeemer, is clothed with three offices, Prophet, Prieſt, and King; and in two of them he deals with us from God, and in one of them he deals with God for us. As a Prophet he reveals God's mind from God to us; as a King he puts forth God's divine authority upon us, and over us, and all things elſe; but as a Prieſt our Lord's buſineſs is only with God for us. In all the exerciſe of our faith, the faith of a poor creature that flies to Chriſt for righteouſneſs and eternal ſalvation, minds him mainly, in that office wherein Chriſt deals with God for us.

3. The *third* thing that we have in the words, is the intereſt that the church hath in this High Prieſt: *Having an High Prieſt*, ſays the apoſtle: the word *having* is not in the original, but it is neceſſarily ſupplied, to make our language run intelligible; and it relates to the former *having*, verſe 19. *Having therefore boldneſs;* and here again, *Having therefore an High Prieſt.* He is not an high prieſt to be provided, not to be got, nor to be ſought, but he is already: every one has him not; but, ſays the apoſtle, we have him already; he ſays he is in his office, he has done the greateſt part of it, and is ready to compleat it quite. So much for the heads of what I would diſcourſe upon from this verſe.

The *firſt* ſhall be to diſcourſe to you ſomething of the prieſthood of Chriſt: then afterwards of the ſingularity of it, and charge of it, and of the intereſt the church hath in it.

The truth that I am to ſpeak to is this, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Saviour of the body, is a true and proper Prieſt. So the apoſtle calls him, and ſo the apoſtle proves him to be at more length, and with more words in this epiſtle, than is any where elſe in all the bible. Though this office of his be touched upon

upon both by the prophets and by our Lord himſelf, and by the other apoſtles in other epiſtles, yet this epiſtle is principally written to ſhew forth the prieſthood of our Lord Jeſus. Concerning this I would give you a few things to be conſidered.

1. We muſt conſider Chriſt's inſtalment, when and how it was that he was inſtalled the great Prieſt over the houſe of God. He did not take this honour to himſelf, but was called of God as was Aaron: *He glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt, but he that ſaid to him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Heb. v. 4, 5. Chriſt's inſtalment into the office is by oath: and this oath was a declaration, not only of the authority that was derived upon him, but of his continuance in it, and that he ſhould have none to ſucceed him therein: *Thoſe prieſts*, ſays the apoſtle, chap. vii. 21. *were made without an oath, but this with an oath:* therefore is he ſurety of a better teſtament. The words of the oath conſecrated and made the Son Prieſt, who is ſo for evermore. The great charge as Prieſt over the houſe of God was derived upon the Son of God in the eternal counſels of the Trinity, that in time, as ſoon as ſin entered into the world, he ſhould enter upon his office.

2. We are to conſider the types of it; and when the truth is come, the ſhadows may be the better known; we may underſtand better by the antitype, what the types did ſignify. The greateſt part of God's worſhip of old, until Chriſt came, did conſiſt in a great many ſhadows of Chriſt's coming; they are called *ſhadows of good things to come, but the body is of Chriſt;* they are the ſhadows, but not the very image of the things, chap. x. 1. Of prieſthoods we find three in the word; they do all ſhadow forth the prieſthood of our Lord Jeſus.

The firſt was the patriarchal prieſthood, the prieſthood of the fathers; for the firſt word you read in all the bible of worſhip to God is expreſſed by *ſacrifice;*

fice; the firſt word of God's good-will towards men, is in the promiſe of Chriſt, Gen. iii. 15. The firſt expreſſion of worſhip to God is in offering ſacrifice, by Cain and Abel; and it is not unlike but Adam was the prieſt. Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, theſe fathers that were acquainted with God, were all prieſts by office, neither of the one order, nor of the other; yet notwithſtanding they were prieſts, and did perform ſacrifice: and all theſe ſacrifices were ſhadows of the grand one that was to be offered by our Lord Jeſus.

The ſecond is the prieſthood of Aaron. There is a great deal written of it in the word; the book of Leviticus is in a manner all of this prieſthood; they were diſtinguiſhed into many ſorts; there was a high prieſt over all, that had ſome of the holy things to manage, which none elſe ſhould meddle with; there was the common prieſt, that ordinary ſacrifices were to be ſlain by, and offered up according to the law. This was a ſhadow of Chriſt's coming, of his being a ſacrifice, as the apoſtle at length in his epiſtle proves.

The third ſort of prieſts is that of Melchiſedec, that this apoſtle in chap. vii. is very exact in the examining of. There are but two places in the old teſtament that ſpeak of him, yet what great matter does the apoſtle draw from theſe two ſcriptures! He leaves nothing that concerns the man without a myſtery. He is *Melchiſedec*, he gathers a myſtery out of his name; he is *king of righteouſneſs*, he gathers a myſtery out of the kingdom, that he was king of; he was *king of Salem*, that is, *king of peace*, ſays he; ſo Chriſt was: he gathers a grand myſtery out of the ſcripture-ſilence concerning him; the ſcripture neither tells when he was born, nor who were his parents, nor when he died; in this, ſaith he, he was made like unto the Son of God, without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; he gathers a grand myſtery out of his bleſſing

Abraham, and out of his receiving the tithes of the ſpoils of Abraham; and from thence proves, that he was a great prieſt indeed, when he was greater than Abraham himſelf, when he received the tithes of Levi, that was then in Abraham's loins; and here he ſhews that Melchiſedec was high beyond that of Aaron. Yet all this was but a type of Jeſus Chriſt; and there is no doubt to be made but this Melchiſedec was a man, and was born, and did die, and was buried like other men; but becauſe the ſcripture ſpeaks of him no otherwiſe, than by way of ſilence in theſe things, therefore the apoſtle gathers wiſely from the ſcripture-ſilence, thoſe things that were typical of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3. We are to conſider the parts of the prieſtly office, wherein it did conſiſt. Theſe we ſhall bring to our purpoſe, and to our Lord's prieſthood. The parts of the prieſtly office were eſpecially two; oblation and interceſſion, offering a ſacrifice, and the making interceſſion in and by the virtue of that ſacrifice. *Every high prieſt taken from among men*, ſays the apoſtle, *that he may offer gifts and ſacrifices, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins*, Chap. v. 1. *Every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices; wherefore it is of neceſſity that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer.* See how the apoſtle argues. Is Chriſt called a High Prieſt? Then he muſt have ſomething to offer; the offering that the prieſts of Aaron offered, he could not offer, for he was ſprung of the tribe of Judah, of which the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks nothing of prieſthood; nay, if he were on earth, he muſt not be a prieſt, not a prieſt of the order of Aaron.

1ſt, Then of Chriſt's oblation, the ſacrifice he offered was himſelf; the ſacrifice of his own body, of his own ſoul: *He made his ſoul an offering for ſin; he poured out his ſoul unto death*, are the old teſtament expreſſions of that ſacrifice, Iſaiah liii. 11, 12. Here

Here now is the most common word in all Christianity; Christ died for us, and the very soul of Christianity lies in the believing improvement of it. The meaning of the word is, Christ died for us, Christ Jesus was offered in sacrifice to God for us; he did not die only in love for us, and he did not die only to give an example for us, and he did not die only for our good; but he *died in our stead*, he died as a sacrifice dies. The way in which the beast that was to be sacrificed died, was this; there was a transferring of the guilt of the master of it upon his head; that guilt deserved death by the law, and this death was inflicted upon the poor innocent creature; this was a shadow of that great sacrifice that the Son of God was to offer.----*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*, chap. ix. 11, 12. Here we would consider, in order to the fixing and feeding our faith on this.

(1.) The vast dignity and preciousness of this sacrifice, the person who did assume this nature, that it was which raised its value and dignity infinitely; the comparison is very mean betwixt a man and a beast. The poor idolaters that fell into that dreadful blindness and wickedness, as to offer unto God the fruit of their bodies, for the sin of their souls; they did fall into that abominable wickedness upon this same principle; they thought always the more excellent the sacrifice was, the more pleasing it would be to God; if the Lord required the blood of a beast for man's sin, would he not be much more pleased with the blood of a child? *Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions?* Will not he accept of the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? It is marvellous to think how strong the spirit of idolatry has been in the world. What a strong desire hath there been of peace with God! What a strong sense of sin hath been in these blinded idolaters, that run into these ways of atonement! The Lord condemns them utterly, because

they were all invented, he never commanded them. Now, the ſacrifice is always, if commanded, the more excellent becauſe of its native dignity. If God commanded the life of man for a ſacrifice, it had been much more than that of a beaſt; but here the life of one that is more than a man is commanded, it is given, therefore it is of infinite dignity. You do not imagine, it may be, ſome of you, what you may feel before you die, even of the great difficulty of having faith firmly fixed, that the death of our Lord upon the croſs, without the gates of Jeruſalem, ſhould be a ſufficient atonement to God, for all the provocations that he hath received: yet in truth ye believe nothing, unleſs you believe that, you believe nothing that will ſtand you in ſtead in a great ſtorm. The man that was ſacrificed was in human nature; but the divine perſon that aſſumed it, made it of infinite dignity; therefore it is called, *the blood of God; the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.*

2*dly*, This ſacrifice that Chriſt made an oblation of, was commanded, and required; and covenanted, upon the terms of our ſalvation; the conditions of it were adjuſted from eternity; the decree of election adjuſted it, the covenant of redemption adjuſted it, that when Chriſt ſhould *make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhould ſee his ſeed, he ſhould prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hand.* Thereupon we find, that the apoſtle brings Chriſt, as coming into the world with this, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, a body haſt thou prepared me:* as if the apoſtle would direct us to this, that Chriſt's thoughts were according to that appointment: "Father, I know, I am not coming into the world to be "a prieſt after the order of Aaron, to offer bullocks "and goats on the altar at Jeruſalem: but I am to "offer that body which thou haſt prepared me upon "the altar of my Godhead, for the ſatisfying thy juſ-"tice, and ſaving thy elect." Theſe thoughts were in his heart.

3*dly*,

3*dly*, The power that our Lord had to do it. Never had any man, no meer man, power over his own life: We have neither physical nor moral power; we can neither lay it down lawfully, when we will, nor can we keep it as long as we will; but in the keeping, and having, and losing it, we are under the law, under his appointment, and under the conduct of his word. Our Lord Jesus was the only man that had power over his own life; *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*, John x. 18.

Lastly, The last virtue and grand effect of this sacrifice is, that that should be in our eyes when we think of our Lord's priesthood, he offered a sacrifice, he gave himself a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour; the greatest things that ever were done in this world, were done by our Lord upon the cross: The law fulfilled, justice satisfied, heaven appeased, God reconciled, the world of the elect redeemed, eternal redemption brought in, savation in God's covenant for us ratified and made unalterable by this blood. This was a great sacrifice, and great effects it had.

The *second* part of the priestly office is intercession. Intercession is nothing else but the application of the virtue of that sacrifice, according to the appointment of God. The intercession of the high-priest under the law was explained and expressed to us, by his entering with the blood of the sin-offering into the holiest of all, and anointing the corners of the mercy-seat therewith, for an atonement for all the children of Israel, that they might be cleansed from all their transgressions. Now, this was a shadow, I say, of the intercession of our great high-priest, Christ Jesus. I shall speak a little of this intercession, and consider it in three seasons.

1. Before he came into the world. 2. While in the world. 3. After he went out of it; for, in all these seasons, our Lord was a priest, and managed intercession.

1. Be-

1. Before he came into the world. Pray obſerve, we touched a little upon Chriſt's being inſtalled in the office of high-prieſt; there could be no exerciſe of this office, till there were ſinners; what uſe could a prieſt be of, till there were ſinners, and ſome elect ſinners in the world? We hope in God, the firſt pair that lived in it were of that number, I mean our firſt parents. Pray obſerve this; all the ſalvation, and pardon of ſin, and entrance to heaven, that was given to the fathers before Chriſt came, was all given in the view, and in the virtue of the death of our Lord, who was to die once for ſin. Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the ſaints of old, had their peace with God, thoſe large meaſures of the love and favour of God and ſalvation in the end diſpenſed to them, thro' the virtue of the ſacrifice of Chriſt not yet offered. The Father truſted his Son firmly, that in the fulneſs of time he would pay the debt. The diſcharge is given before the payment, the diſcharge is given to the criminal before the payment is made by the ſurety. The believers before Chriſt came, looked to him as come; and according to that ſmall light that they had in that time, ſo was their faith. Now, if ſalvation, and all ſpiritual bleſſings were given to believers before Chriſt's coming, before he was in the fleſh, we may well conceive, that the interceſſion which was a part of his office, and which he was to diſcharge in heaven, was not unminded by him.

2. When he was in the world, when he was in the fleſh, we find he was greatly given to prayer. We find him ſpending ſeveral nights alone in prayer to God. Were it lawful to wiſh, and may be it is not; but ſurely, if it had been lawful to wiſh it, and if it had been attained, and if grace had been given to guide it, the moſt happy opportunity that ever was in the world, had been to have heard our Lord Jeſus praying a whole night to the Father. The ſcripture does not tell us what he prayed for; but we are ſure of this, that he prayed for his ſheep: *I pray not for the*

the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, John xvii. 9. Somewhat our Lord used to utter, and to pour forth his heart to his Father about. Many prayers he put up for himself; Christ made no sacrifice for himself, but he put up many prayers for himself: *Who in the day of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and he was heard in that he feared,* Heb. v. 7.

3. The *third* season is, Christ's intercession in heaven, when he went out of the world into his exalted state; and that is the word most commonly used in the scripture about his intercession. His intercession is frequently both in the Old and New Testament subjoined to his sacrifice: *He hath poured out his soul unto death: And he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,* Isa. liii. 12. *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,* Rom viii. 34. *He ever liveth to make intercession,* Heb. iii. 25. Of this intercession of our Lord, as managed in his exalted state, we find several expressions in the scripture, and I chuse rather, and will advise you accordingly to confine your thoughts to scripture phrase, about these things, wherein we may over do, and over think, and think amiss.

1*st*, His intercession stands in his entering into heaven in our name, and in our room. See how the apostle expresses it, Heb. ix. 12. 24. The most glorious, the most powerful entrance, the stateliest thing that we can imagine next to his return again, was when a slain, quickened, ascended Lord Jesus in man's nature entered into the heavenly places; not the *places made with hands, but into heaven itself,* says the apostle. As long as he is there we are there, for all his peoples cases will be minded effectually.

2*dly*, It is called appearing before God for us, not only entering in our name, but staying there on our behalf

behalf, for our good. To this purpoſe ſeems the word of our Lord to point: *The ſpirit ſhall convince the world of righteouſneſs;* why ſo? *Becauſe, I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more.* This is a dark expreſſion, *I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more.* The meaning of it is plainly this, that the certainty of our juſtification by the virtue of the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt ſtands in this, that the perſon whoſe blood wrought out this righteouſneſs is gone into heaven, and is not returned again. Pray obſerve, the high-prieſt under the law, was to go in, and accompliſh righteouſneſs for the atoning of God's anger againſt Iſrael, in the ſeventh month once, and he was to come out again, the poor man was not ſtay there: But our grand high-prieſt is to ſtay for ever in heaven, until all the virtue of his death is fully applied to them that it was appointed for: when all that is done, then he comes out of his throne, in the clouds to gather all his people.

3*dly*, His interceſſion is expreſſed to us by his knowledge and ſympathy, with the ails, wants, and infirmities of his people. So the apoſtle argues, *Seeing then that we have a great high-prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt our profeſſion,* Heb. iv. 14. But, might the poor believer ſay, our dear Lord is paſſed into heaven, and we are here in this miſerable world; how ſhall there be converſe betwixt him and us? *We have not,* ſays he, *an high-prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin,* ver. 15. Pray obſerve, that of the apoſtle's argument, the main thing is implied, the other things are but the out-ſide of it. The thing that is the out-ſide, is, Chriſt was once tempted as we are; the apoſtle's argument from thence is, Therefore we have an high-prieſt, that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but the force and the ſcope of it is, for our conſolation, that he is touched with them; what his glorified ſtate does

does admit of, is what we cannot conceive of, but what our neceſſities crave, our faith is allowed to expect. Our Lord will not cry and weep at Lazarus's grave now; he will not grieve in himſelf, becauſe of the hardneſs and unbelief of their hearts, as he did when on earth; he does not bear our infirmities, nor feel them with that afflicting ſenſe and ſorrow that he had in the days of his fleſh; but every thing that ails a poor believer, is as well felt and as really known by our Lord Jeſus, as if Chriſt and the man were in one place and room together.

Laſtly, His interceſſion ſtands in bleſſing, and wiſhing well. Theſe wiſhes and this bleſſing riſe upward to the Father, and come downwards to us; he wiſhes as it were, he wiſhes and wills that all the bleſſings purchaſed by his death may be beſtowed on all them for whom his blood was ſhed. See how he expreſſes it in his interceſſion on earth, how he prays, *Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am,* John xvii. 24. is that a word for a man in prayer to ſay, *Lord I will?* You ſee how in ſome caſes our Lord with the deepeſt humility addreſſes the Father, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,* Matth. xi. 25. But here now, when he is giving us a copy of his interceſſion, and is fore-acting his interceſſion in heaven, he puts on the authority that in his glorified ſtate he is fully clothed with: *I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* Chriſt's bleſſing of his people is the virtue of his interceſſion; when his wiſhes as it were, and his will is delivered to his Father, then the bleſſing wiſhed for comes down upon us. The laſt thing our Lord did on earth ſhould be dear to us, to think how Chriſt and his people parted; he lifted up his hands and bleſſed them, that they might remember him as long as they lived. Chriſt came into the world to bleſs his people, and died to obtain a bleſſing; and when he went to heaven, he left his

bleſſing upon them; and it was the laſt thing he did upon earth.

APPLICATION.

Is Chriſt a proper prieſt, a true prieſt? 1. Be very thankful to God for this proviſion, that we have an high-prieſt. 2. Be careful to make uſe of him.

1. Be highly thankful to God for Chriſt, as a high-prieſt. The proviſion made is abſolutely needful, no dealing with God but by him. It is proviſion that is made in mere grace and mercy; nothing is in us to move God to it but mere mercy. It is proviſion that is made very coſtly. To be a high-prieſt coſt our Lord a great deal: *he made himſelf of no reputation, and took on him the form of a ſervant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 7, 8. It is however ſuch a proviſion, as brought a great deal of honour to Chriſt: *He glorified not himſelf, to be made an high-prieſt*, but his Father glorified him; this is a very ſtrange word, Heb. v. 5. This high-prieſt was to be made a ſacrifice: was there any great glory in being made a ſacrifice? To be made ſin, to be made a curſe, to be made ſhame, to be made as it were the channel of the wrath and diſpleaſure of God, for all the ſins of the people of God; where is the honour of all this? But look through this; there is grand honour, he is to be the reconciler of all things to God, the great umpire of heaven and earth, the great purchaſer of eternal ſalvation for all the elect. The condeſcenſion and lowneſs that our Lord ſtooped to in undertaking this office, had great dignity in it; and ſo it appears in the iſſue, and will appear more when all is done.

2. Be careful to uſe Chriſt as an high-prieſt. Wo to them that do not know Chriſt; but a great deal more wo to them that know any thing of him, and do not make uſe of him. Every believer hath need of every thing that Chriſt has to give. Chriſt's fulneſs

neſs was never ſo laid open before the eyes of a believer, but the more he ſees Chriſt hath, the more the man is convinced of his need of every thing he ſees. In this uſing of Chriſt as an high-prieſt, only take notice of theſe two particulars.

1*ſt*, Never deal with God without him in any thing. It is only the pride, and ignorance, and folly of the children of men, that they dare venture into God's preſence without Chriſt Jeſus. An underſtanding believer cannot do ſo. He dares not come into God's preſence, but in the hand of this great high-prieſt, and with him upon his heart. Do not offer, I ſay, in any concern, to deal with God without this high-prieſt. Judge ye what would have been done in the ſtate of the church of the Jews, if any man had brought his ſacrifice to the altar, and laid his own hands upon it, and ſaid, This ſacrifice is mine, and I will be prieſt myſelf. That ſoul had been cut off from amongſt his people. This was but typical of the ſevere charge we lie under. In all things that pertain to God, we muſt ſtill bring Chriſt along with us. I will name ſome of thoſe things, that we muſt not deal with God in without him, and that we muſt deal with God by him, and with him.

(1.) When we draw nigh to God for the acceptance of our perſons, and obtaining peace with God; this muſt be by our great high-prieſt, for it is in the beloved only that we are accepted. Eph. i. 6. It is in his Son only that he is well pleaſed. If ever you think to bring that to God that may make him love you, or that will render you lovely in his ſight without Chriſt Jeſus, you will find yourſelves dreadfully miſtaken, when it comes to the iſſue.

(2.) In all the offerings of ſervice to him let them be all by the hand of this high-prieſt. If you pray, pray in his name, and not in your own; if you offer the ſacrifice of praiſe, do it by him: *By him let us offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving.* Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus. This great

high-prieſt muſt receive all our ſervices and ſacrifices, and he only muſt preſent them, if ever they be accepted, Heb. xiii. 15.

(3.) In all your expectations of good from God. Let all theſe expectations be through Chriſt, if there be any looking and working of heart, as there will be if you be believers, in begging ſomething, and looking for ſomewhat. There is no Chriſtian that is exerciſed in begging much, but that poor creature will find ſome expectation and hope riſing, that there ſhall be an anſwer of peace, there will come ſome good, ſome bleſſing will be returned. Now, take heed of this in all theſe expectations, let the anſwer of them all be through Chriſt.

In ſum, The eyes of a believer are to be fixed in Chriſt, in all his dealings with God, (if I may divide them ſo, and this dividing, is but uniting, the eyes of faith that are fixed on Chriſt). The one eye is to be ſet on his oblation, and the other on his interceſſion; and when your eyes are fixed, ſerve God as painfully, and expect as highly as you pleaſe; aſk as largely, and expect as confidently according to his word. Then your eyes are ſingly upon this high-prieſt ſet over the houſe of God when your hearts bear you witneſs, and you are perſuaded in yourſelves, that there is nothing in you, nothing done by you, that can ever turn to a good account in God's ſight, unleſs this great high-prieſt put incenſe thereto, and obtain acceptance from God for you.

SERMON

SERMON XIX.

HEBREWS x. 21,

Having an High Prieſt over the houſe of God.

THE apoſtle preſſing the great duty of drawing near to God, preſſes it from mighty arguments. The ſtrength and multitude of the arguments are ſo many implied proofs of the backwardneſs of our hearts unto this great work, and of their great indiſpoſition for it. His arguments, as you have heard, are all taken from Jeſus Chriſt, concerning whom the apoſtle ſpeaks and holds forth the myſteries of the goſpel, under the veil of the expreſſions of the law; that, by the blood of our Lord, acceſs with boldneſs is made unto the holieſt; that through the veil of his fleſh, that is, him as ſlain, we have a new and living way conſecrated for us.

The third encouragement is, That this Jeſus is a great Prieſt over the houſe of God. There was no approaching to God's worſhip under the law but by the prieſts; the altar was not to be approached to, nor ſacrifice to be offered by any hand but that of the prieſts; the holieſt of all was not to be approached but only by the high prieſt. This the apoſtle here alludes to: We have, ſaith he, an High Prieſt over the houſe of God. All the Jewiſh prieſts, all of the order of Aaron are removed, and the uſe of the temple is removed alſo, and all the ſervice and ceremonies that belonged to it, are removed alſo: but the ſubſtance that they all ſignified we have; we have Chriſt as an High Prieſt over the houſe of God. From this argument for our encouragement, that the apoſtle

apoſtle here gives us, I did take up three things to be ſpoke to in order.

1. The office of our Lord Jeſus, that though he be not named, yet he is named immediately before and quickly after, and all the apoſtle's diſcourſe was of him: therefore there was no hazard of any man's miſtaking: when the apoſtle named the High Prieſt, every Chriſtian would underſtand whom he meant.

2. We have the extent of his charge in his office; *it is over the houſe of God.*

3. We have the church's intereſt in him: *Having an High Prieſt.* It is true, that word in the original is wanting, which is to be drawn from the preceding verſe; but it is neceſſarily implied; this is certain in the ſenſe of it, we have an High Prieſt.

Of the firſt of theſe, Chriſt's office, I ſpake laſt day, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the great work of ſaving of men, was and is a true and proper Prieſt. I ſpake both of his inſtalment in his office, of the types and ſhadows of his office, and the parts of his office in the oblation that he made, and in the interceſſion that he doth daily make, for our Lord is about part of his prieſtly office now. Theſe things I did ſpeak to, and entered a little upon the application thereof.

Now it remains to take a little further notice of a word I obſerved to you before, becauſe it is ſingular, I would not paſs it, but ſpeak ſomething to it apart. The note is this, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a great High Prieſt. I told you that this word that we read here in our tranſlation *an High Prieſt*, is not the ordinary Greek word by which the high prieſt is expreſſed; but it is a ſingular word very different from what we find in other places of ſcripture, *a great Prieſt.* There is ſomething ſingular to be obſerved in every iota, in the ſmalleſt particle of the word of God. This then is that that I would ſpeak to, what is pointed forth to us about Chriſt's prieſthood, when he is called a *great Prieſt.*

1. He

1. He is a great Priest, because he is a great person. He is God's own Son, God's own equal. Tho' he be man, and conversed among men, the person is more than man, he is God. If we therefore consider this, that this Priest, Christ Jesus, is God, he must be a great one. The greatest priests that ever were in the world were men. Melchisedec was certainly a man, though we know nothing of his pedigree; the Holy Ghost conceals it, and makes good use of that concealment, he being the grand type of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

2. Our Lord Jesus is a great Priest, for, by the virtue of his priesthood, he makes all whom he undertakes for priests; *For he hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father*, Rev. i. 6. *He hath made us kings and priests unto God*, Rev. v. 10. *Ye are an holy priesthood*, 1 Peter ii. 5, 9. These things I pass, as not conceiving them to be of so much importance at present.

3. Then and mainly Christ is a great Priest, because of his greatness in his office, or the greatness of the office he was clothed with. A proper priest as under the law, was a sort of mediator betwixt God and men; and this mediation was most eminently and solemnly acted and performed in the great day of atonement, when the high priest entered into the holiest of all in the name of all Israel, and with their names upon his breast; never a one of them upon pain of death must follow him; he brought back the answer of peace from God to them. Our Lord is a greater High Priest; Israel's fate depended on his welcome in the holiest of all, upon the account of a far greater office than this. Let us consider, for the shewing of the greatness of the office of Christ as High Priest,

1st, The greatness of the parties he deals betwixt: he deals betwixt God and creatures; that is great, but there is a great deal more; he deals betwixt an angry God and provoking sinners. That is Christ's work,

work, I ſay, that he is a Mediator betwixt God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus; a work that never any was fit for, and never any called to, but he alone. They were but little inferior ſhadows that were acted by ſome of the ſaints of old. We find indeed in the old teſtament, (and there is no reaſon to queſtion, but ſome may be again in the new, in our days), that ſome have ſtood, by faith and prayer, betwixt the dead and the living, and ſtayed the plague; that when God hath been angry, and his anger hath begun to burn, ſome of his ſervants have ſtood in the breach before him to turn his anger away, Pſalm cvi. 23. That is recorded to the praiſe of Moſes, *Therefore he ſaid that he would deſtroy them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, leſt he ſhould deſtroy them.* If I may ſo ſpeak, there was but temporal anger, and a temporal judgment threatened, and a temporal mediator, and a temporal mercy obtained; but the mercy is far o-otherwiſe here, Chriſt undertakes as Prieſt betwixt theſe two great parties, an offended God and a ſinful people.

2*dly*, His greatneſs in his office appears in the great work he doth in it; and that is, to reconcile both, to make up the peace: *We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, Rom. v. 10. Therefore being juſtified by his blood, we are reconciled to God by the blood of his croſs, Coloſ. i. 20. What a marvellous way was this, the taking up this controverſy, that this great High Prieſt's undertaking in this manner ſhould bring about, which otherwiſe was utterly impoſſible!

3*dly*, His greatneſs in his office appears in the greatneſs of the ſacrifice that he offered; he offered himſelf; but who knows the value and worth of that *ſelf? He gave himſelf a ranſom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. Immediately after that he had ſaid, that *there is one God, and one Mediator betwixt God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* Sirs, the people that lived when Chriſt was

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in the world, and saw him, and heard him preach that saw him eat and drink, the greatest part of them thought with themselves they saw no more but a man; they could not see through the veil of his flesh, to see who dwelt in that temple; yet there were a few that did see: *The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. The sacrifice that Christ offered was himself; thereupon the apostle prefers him greatly unto all the priests of old; for it was but the blood of bulls, or calves, or goats, of creatures meaner and lower than themselves, that they offered in sacrifice to God; but our Lord Jesus Christ becomes a greater Priest by a greater offering. Nothing but the human nature of Christ could be the sacrifice; there was more than the man Christ that was the priest: *He offered himself up to God through the eternal Spirit without spot*, Heb. ix. 14, I would be loath to draw people's imaginations unto the knowing of Christ after the flesh; but whosoever he be that believeth not that Jesus is come in the flesh, is a man not born of God. We must know Christ's flesh, we must know the sacrifice, and what made it to be so great. If Christ had been only a man, his blood had been no more than the blood of another man, only because it was a sinless man that made it better; as we may say of the sacrifices that were offered to the praise and service of God, by the blood and sufferings of many witnesses of Jesus, they are called sacrifices in the word; but there is nothing of priesthood here, they are not sacrifices of atonement or propitiation, they are but sacrifices of praise and testimony. The great view that we have, and that our faith should feed on about the sacrifice of our Lord, is this, That there was a piece of man's nature, by the extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost, framed in the womb of the virgin, and which was assumed by the Son of God, and made the temple wherein God dwelt; there dwelled the fulness of the Godhead bodily; it is this

temple of his body that was the great ſacrifice, to which all the worſhip, and truſt, and adoration of his people was rightly directed. For it is certain, that if our Lord Jeſus Chriſt were in his human nature on earth, he in that nature is to be immediately, and formally, and directly adored and worſhipped; they are never reproved that did ſo. When he was in his low eſtate, the poor woman fell down and worſhipped him, crying, *Lord, help me*, Matt xv. 25. Chriſt never found fault with that; but when any poor believers, in the height of their zeal or reſpect either to apoſtles or angels, did ſo, they were checked immediately: *Stand up*, ſaid Peter to the centurion, *I myſelf alſo am a man*, Acts x. 26. *See thou do it not*, ſays the angel, *I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren*, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.

Laſtly, Chriſt's greatneſs in his office appears in the great glory that accrues to him in it, and by it.

(1.) He in and by this office is made the head of the new creation; Chriſt is made the head of the new world. As God equal with the Father, and as the eternal Word of God, he made all things, and without him was nothing made that was made; by him were created all things, both angels, and principalities, and powers, all things were created by him and for him, Col. i. 15, 16. But now, if I may ſo ſpeak, there hath entered one thing into the world, that hath marred all the creation; that is ſin. Our Lord came to repair this with advantage. For be perſuaded of it, that unleſs the Lord had contrived to have brought more glory to his name by ſin's entrance into the world, than its entrance could bring diſhonour to him, it had never entered; for he does all things for himſelf; and the very permitting of ſin was an act of infinite wiſdom in God willing his own glory; and by Jeſus Chriſt, as the great High Prieſt, is this end reached; he is made the head of the whole creation; all things are reconciled, all things are ſet to rights

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in him, all things are to be gathered together unto an head in him as the head.

(2.) There is this glory to our Lord as Priest, that makes him a great one, that the everlasting salvation of all the elect and redeemed is purchased by him. What an unspeakable honour is this? He is the proper cause of the salvation of all that are saved; he becomes the captain, head, and author of our salvation; He is *the author of eternal salvation*, Heb. v. 9. *He hath obtained eternal redemption for us*, Heb. ix. 12. This I would consider a little more particularly, namely, the glory that comes to our great High Priest, by his being the author of eternal salvation.

[1.] We find that all faith in approaches to God is to be made through him; all acts of trust Godward are to be made through him; *No man cometh to the Father but by him. He saves them that come unto God by him*, Heb. vii. 25 *By him we believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory*, 1 Peter i. 21. This is proper divine honour to be a mean of peace with God; and that person that is the mean of approaching to God, and that is the object of our faith, is always divine. We can approach to God by no creature, it is an honour too big for them; but we may approach to God by Christ Jesus, for the Father hath consecrated him in this station; *He suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Peter iii. 18.

[2.] All the gracious communications that are betwixt God and men, is all through this great High Priest. This is his glory, this makes him a great one. All the gracious communications and fellowship, either of God's giving to us, or our returning again to him, are all through this great High Priest; the communications, and blessings, and privileges to us, and the return of praise to God again, are all thro' Christ.

1.] The communications that are from God to us, do all come from Christ. If you receive them, you

know which way they come, for they taſte of the channel.

[1. Our juſtification. This is by the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom. iii. 24. Whenever a ſinner ſtands accepted before God, that ſtate of acceptance is owing to this great High Prieſt; if God look graciouſly upon him, if we may ſtand with confidence in his preſence, it is all through Jeſus Chriſt.

[2. Our ſanctification is by the Spirit of Jeſus. Whenever ſanctification is begun, Chriſt is formed within; whenever ſanctification goes on, conformity to Chriſt is advanced, and we are going towards perfection. What is perfect holineſs, but only conformity to the image of his Son? And to this the Lord hath predeſtinated all his choſen, Rom. viii. 29.

[3. Our adoption is through this great Prieſt alſo: *He hath redeemed them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of ſons*, Gal. iv. 5.

[4. Our perſeverance is only owing to Chriſt's grace and power. He is able to make us ſtand, and he will make us ſtand. See what the apoſtle ſays concerning the poor weak tottering Chriſtian, that is weak in the faith, Rom. xiv. 4. Our ſupports and encouragements under all our temptations and difficulties are owing to Chriſt; and eternal glory at laſt is owing to him alſo; he purchaſed it for us, he hath poſſeſſed it in our room, and receives us to himſelf at laſt; *that where he is, there we may be alſo*, as his own words are. So,

2.] Is it as to all returns of ſervice unto God again. Theſe are all to the honour of our great High Prieſt; that as God diſpenſes all his good-will and favour through Chriſt, we are to return all ſervice and worſhip to God in him. This I would explain to you in theſe things.

[1. That all the adoration, and worſhip, and obedience, and ſervice, call you them by what name you will, that is now given by Chriſtians, is given at the

the command of our Lord Jeſus. We muſt take this great High Prieſt's will as the rule of our worſhip. *So the Lord hath commanded*, is enough for a Chriſtian's conſcience; and where the Lord hath not commanded, no tender conſcience will act. Let men talk what they will, let the authority of men, either of churchmen or ſtateſmen, work as they will, if they be in matters of the worſhip of God, our great High Prieſt muſt command it, or we dare not do it. It had been a great deal better for the intereſt of Chriſt's church in the earth, if the great High Prieſt had been better conſulted. *Conſider*, ſays the apoſtle, *the High Prieſt and Apoſtle of our profeſſion.* How many names hath the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the word? He is called the Apoſtle and the High Prieſt of our profeſſion; he is the Lord our righteouſneſs. We muſt profeſs nothing but what he injoins, believe nothing but what he reveals, do nothing but what he commands.

[2. Not only muſt all worſhip, and ſervice, and obedience, be done as obedience to him, but it muſt be all done in his name; that is more, not only at his command, but in his name. If we pray, it is in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, John xiv. 13. If we offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices unto God, it is by Chriſt our great High Prieſt, that we are to offer them, Heb. xv. 15. To offer worſhip to God in the name of Chriſt, is another ſort of buſineſs than people commonly imagine; it is to ſet about the performance with an eye to the great undertaking of this great High Prieſt.

[3. It tends to his glory not a little, that the eternal praiſes of the ſaints in heaven will all depend, and border, and reſt upon this great Prieſt our Lord Jeſus; that when the heirs of glory are come to the poſſeſſion of the inheritance that is purchaſed for them, the praiſe of this grace will be eternally ſung by them. That ſong in Rev. v. 9, 11. is a ſong of praiſe to this great

great Prieſt, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. Thou haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood,* ſays he. Muſt not then Chriſt be a great Prieſt, when all the ſalvation that is diſpenſed on earth is all owing to him, and all the praiſe that will be given in heaven will be all paid to him? Thereupon the apoſtle hath that word, 2 Theſſ. i. 10. *When he ſhall come,* (ſpeaking of our Lord's ſecond coming), *to be glorified in his ſaints.* The greatneſs of Chriſt's prieſthood will never appear ſo fully, as when the whole virtue of his ſacrifice ſhall be ſeen, when all the heirs that his blood has bought ſhall appear together, and all the glory and the poſſeſſors thereof.

APPLICATION.

Our Lord Jeſus is a great Prieſt. 1. Then let him be great in your eye. He is great in himſelf, great in his office, great in his Father's eye; let him be alſo great in yours. Low, and common, and mean thoughts of Chriſt are very ordinary, and very ſinful. If people would take the apoſtle's exhortation, Heb. iii. 1. *Conſider the High Prieſt of our profeſſion;* if people would take a more near and cloſe view of Jeſus Chriſt in his office of a Prieſt, what a beautiful ſight would they ſee? Chriſt always riſes in mens eſteem, according as he is bright or dark in their eyes. Every man eſteems Chriſt highly, that knows him clearly. It is impoſſible, but the beams of the ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt muſt imprint upon the ſoul unſpeakable apprehenſions of his greatneſs and value. See how the apoſtle ſpeaks of him; that very word is enough to make one have high thoughts of Chriſt, if they were heard by faith: Heb. i. 2, 3. *God----hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds. Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs*

expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power. Muſt not this be a great perſon now, that is the very brightneſs of the Father's glory? that is, another perſon, but the ſame God? and exactly like him? What does this great one now? He upholds all things by the word of his power; he made all things of nothing in the beginning, and, by the ſame word of power, keeps all things from dropping again into nothing. What more ſtately can be ſaid in the word of the divine dignity of his perſon? Now, in the next word, he comes to ſpeak of his office, *when he had by himſelf purged our ſins.* How marvellous was it that ſo great a perſon ſhould come down for ſo mean and ſordid an employment as to purge our ſins? A prince removing dung from his own ſtable is a mean thing in regard of this: he did not commit this great work to another, but he did it himſelf; he purged our ſins by himſelf, that is, himſelf offered in ſacrifice for ſins.

2. Have a care that you make uſe of Jeſus Chriſt as a great Prieſt.

1*ſt*, Bind this matter upon your conſciences, that the greateſt ſin, or the greateſt duty, that is committed or performed by men, lies here. The greateſt ſin is not improving Chriſt, the greateſt duty is uſing him in that ſtation the Father hath ſet him in. *See* ſays the apoſtle, *that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh*, Heb. xii. 25. Pray, obſerve what the connection is, *Ye are come*, ſaith he, ver. 24. *unto Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel. See then that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh.* If Chriſt come to ſpeak to you as a Prieſt, if Chriſt come to you by his blood; take heed, that you refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: there is no eſcaping, if you turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven.

2*dly*, As you would be careful to make uſe of Chriſt as a Prieſt to you, ſo you ſhould learn to do it confidently. We ſhall have further occaſion to ſpeak of the

the confidence of faith which is allowed, in the next verſe; yet I would not paſs it now, when it is ſo needful to ſpeak of this great duty, this great grace of making uſe of and improving of this great Prieſt. It ſhould be done with confidence.

1. With confidence as to the greatneſs of his office, and the ſufficiency of his ſacrifice. Lay that down and ſettle upon it, whenever you come to act faith on Chriſt for the pardon of your ſins, and bringing you into the favour of God. Remember, you come before God in the name of a High Prieſt, whoſe ſacrifice is great. There are many great objections that hinder confidence; I will name a few of them, and I will tell you where their anſwer only lies. You may try and ſearch for other anſwers, and the anſwers may pleaſe ſometimes for a little while.

The firſt objection is this, "Shall I draw near to "God? I have to do with a great God." So you have; in all your dealings with God about ſalvation, you have to do with a great God; his majeſty when it is diſcovered, unleſs Chriſt be diſcovered alſo, is one of the grandeſt ſhakings of faith: *Wo is me*, ſaith Iſaiah, *I have ſeen the holy One of Iſrael.*

The ſecond objection is, "I am a great ſinner."

The third is, "That the law is a great and awful "law, that I am to anſwer to."

All this is true. What ſhall a man do with this? Will God grow leſs, will the law be unbinded, or thy ſin removed? No; they ſtand all as they are, an infinitely great God, a vile guilty ſinner, a righteous holy law, that cannot be defeated.

The only anſwer is here, If I have a great God to deal with, and if I am a great ſinner, and if a great law to reckon with; I have a great High Prieſt, and I can ſet this alone againſt all theſe: he is a High Prieſt whoſe ſacrifice is of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour before the great God; the virtue of it cleanſeth ſin, and the virtue of it fulfils the law. The apoſtle therefore, when he is giving the grand foundation of a Chriſtian's faith,

faith, lodges it all upon this great High Priest: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* But how can God justify? *It is Christ that died,* says he, *yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* His dying is the oblation of this great High Priest, his rising again is the application thereof, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

(2.) In your making use of Christ as High Priest betwixt God and you, you must do it not only with confidence of the worth and virtue of the sacrifice, but with confidence as to your right to make use of it. Here is a common deceit that Satan hinders the peace of many a poor Christian by; the greater our shame; his cunning is not so great as our folly is great. The common thought of men is this, there is no doubt but that Christ is a great Priest, and that his sacrifice is a great sacrifice, happy are they that have the virtue of it; but what right have I to make use of it. The meaning of this question, What right have I? is commonly this, May I adventure upon it without sin? This is undeniable that thou mayst; for there are these three things I would lay before you.

[1.] God commands thee, whoever thou art, to deal with him about salvation. Pray lay this down for a conclusion; it is the certain revealed mind and will of God, that every man and woman, how great sinners soever they be, should deal with him about their salvation. God never allows men to run to hell, neither in security, nor in despair; but he proclaims his displeasure against those that do either way. If men run to hell sleeping or roaring, and depart from God with a tormenting conscience, they are both condemned justly. This then is a principle, that is some way befriended by the light of nature, the only true God commands me in his word to deal with him about salvation; and since his patience has kept me out of hell, he allows me to lay hold of his grace, for the preventing of that dreadful ruin.

[2.] God forbids thee to deal with him about ſalvation in any other name, but in Chriſt's name. That is as plain as the other. As God would have men mind their ſalvation, and glorify him in ſeeking for it from him; ſo he forbids them expreſly, to come about ſalvation in any name but Chriſt's: *There is no ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved*, Acts iv. 12. There are two things that are pretty plain: God commands us to deal with him about ſalvation, and not to go to hell quietly and tamely; and he forbids us to deal with him about ſalvation in any name but Chriſt's.

[3.] He has revealed and ſet forth Chriſt Jeſus unto men in the goſpel to be thus made uſe of: Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.* As really as the brazen ſerpent was erected upon the pole, that the ſtung Iſraelites might look and live; ſo truly is Chriſt Jeſus held forth in the goſpel, that every man that has a mind to ſalvation may look to him and get it. All men that live where the goſpel is preached have alike right to believe on Chriſt Jeſus; no man has a right in Chriſt, till he is a believer. There are ſecret purpoſes and thoughts in God's heart where to apply his grace; but in the public diſpenſations of it, all men are alike afar off, and all have alike equal right to believe. There is not a poor creature upon the face of the earth, that lives where the goſpel is preached, but he has as much right to believe on Chriſt for the ſalvation of his ſoul, as Saul had when he went to Damaſcus. Indeed an actual right follows faith. Does God command you to treat about ſalvation with him? doth he forbid thee to treat in any other, but in Chriſt's name? hath he revealed Chriſt Jeſus in the goſpel, for this end to be made uſe of? How can the devil prevail with any creature ever to fall into this dreadful imagination, I am afraid God will be

be angry, if I ſhould venture the burthen of my loſt ſoul upon Chriſt Jeſus? Be ye perſuaded of it, that murther and adultery, and the greateſt abominations, are not more diſpleaſing by virtue of that command of the law, than a bare not improving of the Son of God for ſalvation, is by virtue of the goſpel. This is the condemnation, this is that which ſends multitudes of poor ſinners to hell, if I may ſo ſpeak; it ſends more to hell in London, than all the profaneneſs in the midſt of us; and until the power of the goſpel be ſent more into the hearts of the people; theſe open ſorts of profaneneſs will never be deſtroyed. This confidence is ſo far from pride, that it is a great act of humility; and it is only the pride of mens hearts that hinders this confidence; they are unwilling to caſt themſelves upon this plea alone, to intruſt the whole burthen of their ſalvation upon this great Prieſt alone; that is the way to make all miſcarry.

3*dly*, Make uſe of this great High Prieſt entirely in all things, in all things wherein you need him, in all things wherein he may be uſeful to you. We muſt uſe our High Prieſt about our good things, as well as about our bad. A great many poor creatures are ſo ignorant, I hope ſome may be Chriſtians that are ſo ignorant, but this may be, and it is certain with many of them, that whenever they come to treat with God about their ſin, then they know they muſt treat with him by Chriſt Jeſus; but when they treat with God about their ſervices, and when they preſent their grace, and faith, and repentance, and love, and worſhip, they do not ſee ſo much need of the High Prieſt. If you make right uſe of Chriſt as the High Prieſt over the houſe of God, remember this, that you muſt uſe him as really, as humbly, as entirely, in preſenting your good works to God for acceptance, as in pleading for pardon for your bad ones.

4*thly*, Make uſe of Chriſt as a High Prieſt conſtantly. There may be ſuch a weakneſs amongſt

ſome believers, that they think, that when they began firſt upon godlineſs, they ſtood in need daily of the High Prieſt, they are weak and feeble: but after they have got a great deal of experience, they hope that that experience and the means of grace may do pretty well with them. And that is the reaſon, why ſo many do ſo very ill. No Chriſtian can ever outlive the neceſſity of employing Chriſt as High Prieſt in all the ſteps of his life; and in the laſt ſtep thro' death we muſt ſtill lean upon this High Prieſt; we go by our High Prieſt within the veil leaning, and going through the veil of his fleſh. And truly I am afraid, the Lord prevent it in you mercifully and graciouſly, there are many worſe things to be afraid of; I am afraid of ſome Chriſtians, that their beſt acts of faith on Chriſt Jeſus are at their laſt, that their believing through the courſe of their pilgrimage is a little mingled and mixed with ſomething of themſelves; and when they come to the awful and dreadful ſtep, and look death and judgment in the face, then they throw all away to the moles and bats; then their renouncing their own righteouſneſs, is no great buſineſs to a believer.

Laſtly, Uſe him delightfully, uſe him with pleaſure. Sirs, the conſtraint of conſcience is good where there can be no better: but I would lead you to a better conſtraint, and that is the conſtraint of love: *The love of Chriſt conſtrains me*, ſays the apoſtle, *to live to him.* There is no man ever will be in heaven, but he that loves heaven, and no man walks in the way to heaven, but he that loves that way. There is a perverſe love of heaven, and a miſtaken love of the way to it; and if people could examine their hearts, and find the matter thus with them, I may ſay in a word, there is a determination about your ſtate. A Chriſtian loves heaven becauſe Chriſt is there, and there he is ſeen and enjoyed; and a Chriſtian loves the way to heaven, becauſe it all lies thro' Chriſt: *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved*

loved me, and gave himſelf for me. The virtue of the ſacrifice, giving himſelf for me, is the very ſtrength of my life; whenever I would be recovered, and refreſhed, and ſtrengthened, I take a meal by faith of this love, and of his giving himſelf for me, and do it delightfully. I know that there is ſomething of the new nature, that does prompt every believer to ſome ſpiritual pleaſure in all actings of faith; but ſometimes this is not ſo very remarkable. Says the apoſtle, *Ye fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before you.* Great dangers conſtrain people in a manner to take the firſt way of eſcape; but the believer comes to ſee what a glorious refuge Chriſt is, that not only is he a ſure defence, but a glorious habitation; he bleſſes the danger that drove him, as well as the grace that welcomes him; he in a manner bleſſes the diſeaſe, that hath ſent him to ſo ſweet a phyſician. A great many make uſe of Chriſt as a Prieſt, when they cannot help themſelves otherwiſe. Let it be your thought, If there were a poſſibility of doing my matters with God about ſalvation, otherwiſe than by Jeſus Chriſt, I would renounce them all, and take Jeſus Chriſt. But this is the only way; it ſhould be as our meat and drink. Believing on the Son of God, will never be ſtrongly done till delightfully done. When the weary traveller caſts himſelf with delight, as well as with confidence, upon the ſtone laid in Zion, he then feels the benefit of reſt.

SERMON

SERMON XX.

HEBREWS x. 21.

And having an High Prieſt over the houſe of God.

THIS verſe contains the third encouragement which the apoſtle draws from Jeſus Chriſt to ſtir up believers to approach to God in the right manner. I did propoſe three things to be ſpoke to; I have ſpoke to the firſt of them. The firſt thing in this encouragement is taken from Chriſt's office; he is a Prieſt, and a great one. Accordingly I ſpake to theſe two: 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as a Saviour is a true and proper Prieſt betwixt God and men. 2. That he is a great one; as it is his office to be a Prieſt, he is a great one in that office. From theſe I have ſpoke.

The ſecond thing in the verſe, is that which follows now to be diſcourſed of; and that is our Lord's charge in this office. We are told by the Spirit of God in the words, that he is *a Prieſt over the houſe of God*, in it, towards it, and over it. On this truth, That Chriſt is a great Prieſt over the houſe of God, I would ſpend this time in ſpeaking, and would do it in this order.

1. Shew you, what is the houſe of God that Chriſt's charge is in and over.

2. What ſort of charge and authority he hath in it and over it. Then apply it.

Firſt, What is the houſe of God that Chriſt's charge lies about and over? We all know, that there was of old a typical houſe, and it had a typical prieſt, which was the chief officer over it. Of this there was a change in the wilderneſs, and a good many years

years after they came to Canaan, the tabernacle was removed in all their journeyings in the wilderness, and was removed according to God's ordinance and appointment several times; in the land of promise it was sometimes in Kirjath-jearim; the ark was a while in captivity; it was at last brought to the city of David, then settled by Solomon in the temple, which the Lord calls his house, 2 Sam. vii. 6, 7. This house of God, the temple, was a type of Christ's body. So our Lord uses it of his natural body, if I may so call it: *Destroy this temple*, says our Lord, *and I will raise it again in three days; but he spake of the temple of his body*, John ii. 19, 20, 21. All the glory that was in the temple, was but so many shadows of the great glory of that tabernacle wherein God was to dwell, where the fulness of the Godhead was to dwell in the man Christ. This temple was typical also of Christ's mystical body, the church: therefore we find the church often called by this name, *the temple of the living God: Ye are the temple of the living God.* Our bodies are so, the whole man is so; 1 Tim. iii. 15. *That thou mayst know, how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.* That we have now no more to do with this typical temple, it pleased the Lord, in the depth of his providence, a little while after our Lord Jesus came in the flesh, and after he had gone to heaven, and had fulfilled all righteousness, and had dispatched all his work; it pleased God, I say, to lay this temple desolate by the hands of strangers, and it remains a ruin to this day; and so perhaps it will to the last day. There is now no house can be called the house of God, as the temple at Jerusalem was. Typical temples and typical priests are all expired with the ceasing of the levitical service; and it is but an aping of this, that Antichrist, and they that would work after the same spirit, labour to rear up in the church of Christ. What then is the true house of God? The apostle had certainly no thoughts to draw the minds of these

theſe Hebrews unto the doting upon the outward worldly temple, that he knew was ſhortly to be removed and deſtroyed. By the houſe of God, that Chriſt's charge is about and over, we are to underſtand two things, 1. All the matters; and, 2. All the people of God.

1. All the matters of God. All thoſe things wherein God deals with us, and we with him, our Lord is concerned about them all: *He is a merciful and faithful High Prieſt in things pertaining to God*, Heb. ii. 17. Every high prieſt is choſen from amongſt men for things pertaining to God, Heb. v. 1. Let us look a little to this.

1*ſt*, In all God's dealing with us, he deals with us altogether by this High Prieſt. The Lord hath reſolved, and he keeps his purpoſe, that he never will treat graciouſly with men, but only in, and through, and by Chriſt Jeſus. (1.) In all the revealings of his mind to us, they are in and by Chriſt Jeſus. If ever God manifeſt his will, if he ſpeak forth all his mind unto the children of men, it is by his Son, as the apoſtle tells us, Heb. i. 2. (2.) In all his ruling, and managing, and guiding of his church and people, it is all done by Chriſt Jeſus. (3.) In all the communications of his love, and grace, and mercy to the children of men, they are all given through Chriſt Jeſus. Never did any man obtain a ſaving bleſſing immediately out of God's hand, it is all given by Chriſt Jeſus.

2*dly*, In all our dealings with God, we muſt do ſo too. If God deal with us only by Chriſt Jeſus, we muſt deal with him, and thereby acknowledge this power that our Lord hath over the houſe of God. As for inſtance, (1.) If ever we ſet about the knowing of God, or thinking on him, or ſtudying of him, we muſt do it all by Chriſt Jeſus. There is nothing ſo hard to bring your hearts to; I know it well by my own; and every one that knows his own heart, will

will find it so; there is nothing so hard as for a person to confine all his meditations and thoughts of God unto those discoveries that are made of God in the face of Christ Jesus. There are some natural notions we have of God, and by the light of the word; these are polished in a great many people; thereupon you will find that the religion of a great many folks (a great part of it) who bear their heads high in Christianity before men, lies wholly and altogether, if I may so call them, in a company of philosophical thoughts of the majesty, and power, and attributes of God, and never a thought of God in Christ. Whenever a man thinks of God out of Christ, he enters immediately into a maze and labyrinth, and he will be confounded and wander unavoidably: *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines to us in the face of Christ Jesus*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *If thou hast seen me*, saith our Lord, *thou hast seen the Father also: believest thou this?* John xiv. 9. (2.) In all our treatings with God for reconciliation, they must all be managed in Christ Jesus. This is one of the matters, that God is specially concerned in this office. It is a great reflection on Christ as a High Priest over the house of God, when a sinner offers to make his peace, or seek his peace from God, without Christ. No man can come to the Father but by him; he is the only introducer of poor men into God's favour and friendship. (3.) In all the exercise of grace and performance of worship and duty, these are matters of God, these are things wherein we have to do with God, and in all these we must deal with God through Christ Jesus. Whatever our sacrifices be, they must all be offered up in and by the hand of this great High Priest. Never was there a man in this world, that had so good a gift to give to God, as that he durst give it out of his own hand. No, we must put it in Christ's hand; and till it come out of his own hand, it can never be accepted of God; We are *built up a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices*,

acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Peter ii. 4, 5. So alſo as to all our expectations from God, all the hopes that we have of good things from God, are all to be in Chriſt Jeſus; the apoſtle therefore does well call him *Jeſus Chriſt, who is our hope*, 1 Tim. i. 1. That is the firſt thing that is to be underſtood by the houſe of God; all the matters of God, all things that pertain to God, every thing wherein God deals with men, and wherein men deal with God, he deals with us by this Mediator and High Prieſt, and we muſt deal with him ſo too. He knows we cannot bear his immediate dealings with us, and we ſhould know that we are not able to deal with him; therefore the Mediator is betwixt God and men, that all the affairs of God and men may be well and fitly managed.

2. By the houſe of God, is underſtood, in the word, the people, the church of God, a company of people that our Lord hath choſen and gathered unto himſelf in every age. Sometimes they have been fewer, and ſometimes they have been more; but it is a plantation that hath been of ſo long ſtanding, and there hath been ſo many in every age, that doubtleſs when they come all together, there will be a great and goodly company; they are the houſe of God: *In whom you alſo are builded together*, ſays he, *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 22. So much for this thing, What this houſe of God is, that Chriſt's charge is over; all matters of God, and all the people of God.

The *ſecond* thing to be ſpoke to is, what is this authority that Chriſt has over this houſe of God? I will name a few of the general properties of it, and give you a few of the inſtances thereof, that may give ſome underſtanding of the nature of it.

1. This authority that our Lord hath is divine, though delegated, though commiſſioned. All commiſſion from God is not divine, is not ſo divine as Chriſt's authority is. The apoſtles had their authority from Jeſus Chriſt, yet their authority was but that

that of men; whatever power they are clothed with, it was ſtill in the name of another, in the name of God. But our Lord Jeſus comes in his own name, and in the name of his Father; his power, though delegated, is divine, becauſe the perſon is ſo; ſo that all the reſpect that we owe to divine authority in its moſt glorious exertings and exerciſes, is due to the Son of God. He hath committed all power to him, *that all men ſhould honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him*, John v. 23.

2. This authority of our Lord's is univerſal and abſolute; it is over all things, it is over all things with reference to his church and people. The immediate exerciſe of his charge as Prieſt is about the houſe of God, but every thing beſides, as it may ſerve that. So ſays the apoſtle,-----*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 21, 22. He hath put all things under his feet; therefore it is evident, that there is nothing that is not put under him, as the apoſtle exactly reaſons upon Pſal. viii. in Heb. ii. 8. *In that he ſaith all things are put under him, it is evident, that there is nothing left that is not put under him;* where we have the Spirit of God, in the new teſtament, giving a full meaning of the Spirit in the old. This authority that Chriſt hath over the houſe of God, is altogether incommunicable; there is none but he that is God's fellow and equal, that is worthy of this honour, nor able to manage this great truſt; there is none capable of this truſt but Chriſt Jeſus; no men, no angels have a ſhare in it. None of the apoſtles ever had a ſhare in an authority over the houſe of God: they had but the power of ſervants and miniſters in the houſe; they were not lords in it: as the ſame apoſtle in Heb. iii. does moſt elegantly compare Moſes and Chriſt: *Moſes was faithful in all his houſe;* but how? *as a ſervant*, ſaith he; *but Chriſt as a*

Son over his own houſe; whoſe houſe are we, verſe 6. This now is the general nature of this great authority that our Lord Jeſus, as High Prieſt, hath over the houſe of God; it is divine, it is abſolute in all things, it is communicable to none, it paſſes not from him to any body. The firſt typical prieſthood was put into Aaron's hands; when he died, it was left to his ſon, and ſo from one to another's ſon; ſays the apoſtle, *They could not continue in their office by reaſon of death: but this man, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood*, Heb. vii. 24. It were well then, if ſo be, that the name of a prieſt had been buried in the ruins of the temple at Jeruſalem: for that name and the office did alone belong to that conſtitution, and is quite foreign to the miniſtry of the goſpel: but Antichriſt hath brought it in, as he makes himſelf the grand high-prieſt, and ordinary miniſters as underlings unto him: and he hath framed a ſacrifice for them, which is the very abomination of abominable Popery; he has a prieſt, and altar, and ſacrifice, for they will be perpetually together; where there is no altar, nor ſacrifice, wherefore ſhould there be a prieſt? If our Lord hath offered the grand ſacrifice, and be the everlaſting Prieſt, and about his work in heaven, and has ended all his work on earth, there is no work for any man under that name, and in that office upon earth.

Now, the other thing that I promiſed to ſpeak to about the power of our Lord, is to ſhew you ſome particular inſtances of it, that we may not reſt only in generals about Chriſt's power over the houſe of God.

1. Chriſt's power over the houſe of God is ſeen in this, that he calleth and bringeth into the houſe of God whom he will; he calls ſtrangers, he hath the key of the houſe of David, and he opens when he will, and ſhuts when he will, Rev. iii. 7. Do any of you partake of the grace of God? are you brought in

in truly to this ſpiritual houſe of God? All the thanks is owing to this great High Prieſt. Our Lord puts forth his power and ſaves whom he will: he brings men to God; he follows after ſtrangers; he knows them well. There is not an elect perſon in the purpoſe of God, and there is not a redeemed perſon in the deſign of Chriſt's dying, but our Lord knows them, and will purſue them, and follow them, and overtake them and bring them in; *Other ſheep*, ſays he, *I have, which are not of this fold; them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice*, John x. 16.

2. Chriſt's power over the houſe of God is ſeen in this, that he diſpenſes and diſpoſes the treaſure of the houſe as he ſees good. All the riches of this great houſe of God are given forth by our Lord Jeſus, as he thinks good: *Unto every one of us*, ſaith the apoſtle, *is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 7. No wonder that our Lord has great power in diſpenſing his grace, for it is all his own; all that is given out of his houſe is the purchaſe of his blood, and what he hath dearly bought, that he might be the Lord thereof: *Of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace.*

3. Chriſt's power over the houſe of God is ſeen in this, that he welcomes all his people to the manſions in his Father's houſe, which he has prepared for them. After he hath brought them into the lower houſe here, and hath enriched them as he ſees good, he at laſt brings them into his preſence above, and they enter by him as the gate. John xiv. 2, 3. our Lord ſpeaks of his going to prepare a place for them, and of his receiving them to himſelf. The crown of eternal life is given particularly by Chriſt Jeſus to every ſaved one, as certainly as every bit of ſaving grace is Chriſt's free gift. Now, the crown of eternal glory is his free gift: *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life*, ſaith the apoſtle, Jude, verſe 21. They are vain lookers for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life, that are re-

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jecters of the mercy of our Lord Jeſus in fitting us for eternal life now. But a poor believer that hath partaked of eternal life in its ſeed, and hath received a great deal of Chriſt's mercy, this man may eaſily expect, and confidently look for the greateſt at laſt; he that hath lived upon Chriſt's grace and mercy all his days may expect the laſt gift when he ſtands in need of it, and when our Lord's time is to give it.

Laſtly, The laſt inſtance of Chriſt's great power over the houſe of God is in his coming again, and fetching the whole family together. Now heaven is filled with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, as Chriſt calls them. We do not know how heaven is filled now; ſometimes we ſee believers expiring, and they breathe out their breath, and leave a carcaſe lying upon the bed; we can ſee no further; how the immortal ſoul maketh its paſſage into the heavens, and is received there, paſſeth our underſtandings. But there is one filling of heaven that is a-coming, which every one of you will be witneſſes of, God grant you may be joyful witneſſes thereof; that is, when our Lord ſhall come again, and gather the duſt of his people, and raiſe up glorious temples out of their vile bodies, and ſhall carry up ſoul and body to heaven. This is a proof, I ſay, of the laſt great inſtance of Chriſt's power over the houſe of God, that as he did aſcend himſelf, and entered heaven with his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption; ſo the day is coming, and may be nearer than you apprehend, when he ſhall come again and gather all his people, and judge them, and ſave them, and carry them up to heaven, and preſent them to the Father. The one is as ſure as the other. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ſo Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without ſin unto ſalvation.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, As ſure as Chriſt died without the gates

gates of Jerusalem, and there were thousands then alive that knew it and saw it, as sure as that was, he will make another appearance without sin to salvation, to all them that look for him. This is the last act of our Lord's conduct in his great guidance of the house of God, that he then puts down all power, and authority, and rule, and lays aside his own mediatory dispensation of the kingdom, that God may be all in all, as the apostle speaks of it, 1 Cor. xv. 26.

APPLICATION.

Is Christ a great Priest over the house of God? Then I would, 1. Exhort you to have great and high thoughts of Christ Jesus. Pay a great deal of honour to him. Never think so highly of Christ as to be afraid to employ him; but, in all your employings of him, have a great sense of his grandeur and power. With what reverence, and adoration, and submission should we employ him, when we exercise faith on him! Believing on Jesus Christ, and exercising faith on him, trusting him with the concerns of our eternal salvation, is one of the most bold and familiar, and also one of the most reverent and awful things that a poor creature can do.

2. Learn to pay your due respect unto the true house of God, because of its master's sake. Every thing that concerns the house of God should be regarded reverently by us, because it is Christ's charge.

1*st*, All the orders, and all the ordinances of the house of God are to be reverently regarded, because they are under Christ's charge; he is the Lord and Master of them all. All gospel-ordinances are Christ's appointments, and they are to be used as such; and we are to submit to them, and use them reverently as such. What our Lord said of his supper, may be said of every appointment, *Do this*, saith our Lord, *in remembrance of me*; hear the word in remembrance of Christ that appointed it; pray in remembrance of him

him that commands men every where to follow his example, and to lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting. All the ordinances and order of his houſe are to be reverently regarded, becauſe of the Maſter thereof. The word is the word of Chriſt: *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly*, Col. iii. 16. This would make your Bibles dearer to you, and make you uſe them ſpiritually, if every time you open your books, you thought, This is Chriſt's will, and this is a letter to me ſent by Jeſus Chriſt from heaven; and he by his Spirit can ſpeak them to me, and I by faith may vent that back in prayer, that may make as true comfort and converſe with him, as if he were upon the earth.

2dly, There is in Chriſt's houſe the dwellers, the inhabitants; his people are of the houſe, they dwell there. That charge our Lord gave, and the Lord grant its power may reach our hearts: *Take heed*, ſays he, *that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones that believe on me*, Matth. xviii. 6, 10. They are little, they are weak as to a great many things; wherefore they may be deſpiſed. There is a deep providence of God in this, that there is not a perfect ſinleſs Chriſtian on the earth. I do not believe the world would like them the better, if they were ſo; I do believe, if there were a perfect holy perſon upon earth, that perfectly holy perſon would be more perfectly hated by all the ungodly than any. But whatever the infirmities and weakneſſes of the children of God are, which things commonly make them to be deſpiſed, our Lord warns againſt it. Now, if I may ſo ſpeak, our Lord's argument is not ſo great, though it be a good one, as that which this text does afford. Our Lord's argument is only drawn from a ſmaller thing: *Take heed, that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones that believe on me;* for as mean as they be, their angels behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. You would think it a great thing to have the company of an angel,

angel, you would be loath to deſpiſe an angel; but you can deſpiſe a weak ſilly believer, ſays our Lord; that weak one that believes in me is under the guard of theſe angels, yea of him who is the Maſter of angels, of our Lord Jeſus, who is the head of all principalities and powers; take heed therefore you deſpiſe not ſuch a believer.

3*dly*, There are the concerns of the houſe of God, that you ſhould be concerned about greatly. It is a ſhame to think, how we are outſtripped by old teſtament ſaints in this point. What great things are ſpoken of the zeal of the people of God of old! *The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up*, ſaith David, typically of Chriſt. And Pſal. cxxii. 7, 8. *For my brethren and companions ſakes, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee; peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces.* How much more may we ſay, for our Lord's ſake, who is the Maſter of his houſe, we wiſh well to the church of Chriſt. There is a great want of public-ſpiritedneſs, and it is a great ſign that God hath no great mind to do any great public work for his glory, and for his people, in that he hath reſtrained the ſpirit of due concernment about the houſe and intereſt of Chriſt. All men ſeek their own things, but no man the things of Jeſus Chriſt. If a particular church, and a particular city or land have the goſpel in any tolerable quietneſs amongſt them, and all is well with them, very unconcerned are they about the great diſhonour that Chriſt ſuſtains in the world. For Chriſt's ſake we ſhould be concerned about all the affairs of his houſe, about the proſperity and adverſity of it; rejoice when it is well with Zion, and mourn when it is otherwiſe.

3. You that have a mind to be in the houſe of God, to be brought into his favour now, and into his preſence hereafter; you muſt mind Chriſt Jeſus, make uſe of him, for he is ſet over the houſe of God; you muſt enter by him, or you can never come into this houſe. If you enter not by him that is the door,

ye are but thieves and robbers, and will be puniſhed for your treſpaſs, rather than commendably entertained. Now, how ſhameful is the practice of a great many in this particular? There are many that do think they are in God's houſe already, as far as God's houſe is to be entered into by men on earth, and they hope they ſhall be in God's houſe above for ever; whereas in the mean time they have no acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt, and no employment for him. See now how men miſtake. There are ſome that think they are born in God's houſe, and therefore they ſhall be well, becauſe they are born of godly parents. There is no man born in God's houſe, no man born in God's inward houſe; a great many are born in the outer courts. There is no man born to good purpoſe, unleſs he be born again. There is no man born in God's houſe, though I acknowledge, that there is an external fœderal right which the children of believers may have.

Some think they are in God's houſe by education; they have light and knowledge, and have been inſtructed in the ways and things of God from their youth and childhood: and by the fruits of theſe, they begin to imagine that ſurely they are in God's houſe. There are ſome that go yet further, and they think they are entered into the houſe of God by their profeſſion, by their profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt; and I acknowledge, that where this is ſincerely done, it goes a great way: but that is not a man's entering into this ſpiritual houſe, but a man's declaring that he is in it already, and that he deſires to be trained up in it. Unleſs you have a particular exerciſe in the employing Chriſt to introduce you into God's preſence: unleſs you have particular experience, that Chriſt hath taken you by the hand, and hath brought you in, you have little to ſay for your being Chriſt's. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the only man that can introduce a man into God's preſence; and O how ſweetly can he do it? When we ſpeak,

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we must consider that we frame our words with reverence. Our Lord Jesus, in presenting a sinner to the Father, says in a manner, "Father, here is a poor "one that thou hast given me, and that I have re- "deemed; he has been wandering from me, and I "have pursued, and overtaken, and found, and "brought him home, and now I present him unto "thee; Father, welcome this lost sheep." O, when our Lord as it were takes a sinner in his own hand, and presents him to his Father as a returning sheep, as the apostle saith, *You were sometimes gone astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*, 1 Peter ii. 25. how sweet, how great, and how sure is the welcome!

SERMON XXI.

HEBREWS X. 21.

And having an High Priest over the house of God.

YOU have heard again and again, that the scope of the apostle, and of the Spirit of God that guided him in this context, is to encourage believers in approaching to God, by several great discoveries of Jesus Christ, and of the great provision made in him for them.

1. That the entrance to the holiest is made by his blood.

2. That the way that leads unto the holiest of all, is through the veil of his flesh.

3. That he is a High Priest to introduce us, and to bring us unto God. From this third argument of

encouragement that is contained in this verſe, I propoſed three things to be ſpoke to.

1. What that office is that the apoſtle here holds forth Chriſt to be in; he is a High Prieſt, a great one; the word here is only in the original *a great prieſt*, our tranſlators have rendered it an *high prieſt*; the ſame apoſtle in chap. iv. 14. calls him *a great High Prieſt.*

2. I have ſpoke ſomething of Chriſt's charge, whereabout it lies. It is, ſaith the apoſtle, over, or upon, or in the houſe of God. What this houſe of God, and what Chriſt's power and authority in it, and over it is, I ſpake to you laſt day. The houſe of God, is all the matters of God, and all the people of God, and all things wherein God deals with us. He deals with us by Chriſt; and in all matters wherein we deal with God, we muſt deal with him by Chriſt. The high prieſt under the law, was a kind of mediator betwixt God and men. The immediate approaches unto Iſrael's God, were not to be made by the people immediately, but by the high prieſt; and the anſwers of peace were to be returned by him, when he came forth from the holieſt of all.

This I ſhall diſmiſs with a word or two more of application; and that is, Since believers are the houſe of God, they that are ſuch ſhould mind their duty. A great duty lies on them by this name, that they are of the houſe of God.

I will name a few things that are plainly contained in it, and may be ſtrongly urged from it. I ſpeak now to them that are true believers, that are Chriſt's ſpecial charge.

1. You that are the houſe of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, know humbly and remember frequently your great debt unto our Lord Jeſus. I do not believe that ever there was a believer on earth, that had that ſenſe that the greatneſs of the matter calls for, that ſenſe of thankfulneſs for the marvellous change that grace makes when it plucks us out of nature, and brings

brings us into Chriſt, that the caſe requires. To *be tranſlated from the power of darkneſs into the kingdom of God's dear Son*, as the apoſtle's phraſe is, Col. i. 12, 13. is a juſt ground of great thankſgiving. Every one by nature is not only in the houſe of the devil, that is bad enough; but every one by nature is the devil's houſe; that is a great deal worſe: it is a great deal worſe to have him dwelling in us, than to have us dwelling with him: *Ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. Is it not wonderful grace, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will make that heart to be the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, that was, till he entered, the habitation of the devil, and under the power of ſin, and dominion of Satan! For ſin and Satan the father of ſin, are perpetually inſeparable. If a man be ſin's captive, he is the devil's, and taken captive by him at his will, as the apoſtle's phraſe is. Therefore you that have this change wrought in you, that are made the houſe of God, and are brought under the charge of our Lord Jeſus, ſhould humbly and heartily own his great goodneſs in this diſpenſation.

2. You ſhould know where your ſtanding is, what foundation you ſtand upon. All grace comes from Chriſt Jeſus; and the end of his giving of grace is, that he may be more improved and uſed by his people; for all the ſaving graces of the Spirit of God, are but like ſo many various tools and inſtruments, by which the new creature acts towards its original. Now, here is a woful courſe of a great many; when Chriſt beſtows his grace, grace many a time is put in his own room; when he makes his grace to dwell in us, we are apt to forget that our ſtanding is in himſelf alone, that created and infuſed, and diſpenſed the grace that is lodged in us. As we are made veſſels of grace, we are as feeble as ever; no diſpenſation of grace was ever given in this world for that end;

end; and if it be uſed for that end, it is groſsly abuſed. That a believer ſhould live the leſs dependent upon Jeſus Chriſt, is a ſnare that you have great need all of you to take good heed of, and beware of. Remember that you do not live, and that you do not ſtand by the grace that is in you, but only by the grace that is in him. Our ſtrength ſtands in the fountain; *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.* A believer thinks himſelf exceeding weak, when he can ſee nothing of Chriſt's grace in himſelf; but that is a great miſtake; that man is exceeding weak indeed, that can ſee no grace in Chriſt Jeſus; that man is fallen wofully. How excellently does the apoſtle ſpeak of it, 2 Corinth. xii. 9, 19. *Moſt gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. For when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* It is beſt with me when I am nothing. What a mighty word is that, *Though I be nothing*, verſe 11.

3. You that are made the houſe of God, the charge of this great High Prieſt, mind the perfection of your ſtate, preſs towards that. Though believers are the houſe of God now, and he dwells in them, yet there is another houſe and another ſort of dwelling, that they do expect and ſhould long for. All diſpenſations of grace unto the children of God, are not only given in order to prepare them for glory, but in order to enable them to preſs further to the obtaining of the glory of God. *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us, to the glory of God*, Rom. xv. 7. As ſoon as Chriſt's call has reached the heart of a poor ſinner, immediately he ſhould be thinking within himſelf, What is it that I am called to? I am called to heaven, I am called to march towards heaven, and I have Chriſt, and the Spirit, and promiſe, and all diſpenſations of grace as ſeals and earneſts of that great profeſſion. There are ſome things, Sirs, that are needful to make a lovely Chriſtian, and I am afraid, that we may go far, and ſearch long before we

can

find any of them; but we hope ſome ſuch there are. A lovely Chriſtian is a man whoſe root is deep in Chriſt, *rooted and built up in him*, Col. ii. 7. People will not perceive it, until many ſad experiences make them to feel it; there are many things amiſs with many Chriſtians, and they are full of complaints; they do not fully ponder this, that the root is not deep enough, they have not taken deep root in Chriſt Jeſus. Again, a lovely Chriſtian is one whoſe fruit abounds: *That your fruit may abound through him. Abide in me, and I in you*, ſays our Lord, *ſo ſhall you bear much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples*, John xv. 8. And ſeveral places in the ſame chapter. The third property of a lovely Chriſtian is, that his leaf is green, his profeſſion fair, and clean, and not withered. It is ſaid of the happy man in the firſt pſalm, *His leaf fadeth not;* he is well planted, and he brings forth much fruit in ſeaſon. Alas! fruit is in a great meaſure gone, and the beauty of the leaves of our profeſſion is in a great meaſure withdrawn alſo. How few can ſpeak David's words, Pſalm lii. 8. *But I am like a green olive-tree in the houſe of God.* The lovelineſs of our profeſſion tends to our Lord's praiſe, and our fruitfulneſs therein not only to his praiſe, but to our advantage. The laſt thing in a beautiful Chriſtian is, that I may allude to the word of the prophet Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, that his *branches reach to heaven.* My meaning is this, that there ſhould be breathings and pantings after perfection, and there ſhould be ſpringings up towards eternal life. Examine yourſelves now about this point. I dare ſay, that the greateſt part of Chriſtians, found honeſt Chriſtians, have more mind to beg grace of God, that they may glorify him here, than they feel of any great deſires of enjoying a perfect ſtate hereafter. It is a ſhame, Sirs, to think, how many Chriſtians are plucked to heaven againſt their will; my meaning is, before they would be there. They would be there at laſt;

laſt; but the ſhame is, that we ſhould be ſo unwilling to be there, whenever he calls. A believer, an heir of heaven, to be ſorry to leave this earth, is a moſt ſhameful thing; but the churches of Chriſt are full of ſuch ſhameful things. It was wont to be otherwiſe, and God can make it otherwiſe again. *We groan within ourſelves, being burthened*, ſays the apoſtle. Why, what burthened the man? Did his afflictions burthen him? No; he gloried in them. Was it his temptations burthened him? No; he rejoiced in them too. His burthen was, that he was out of them, 2 Cor. v. 2, 3.

Laſtly, You that are the houſe of God and believers, concern yourſelves in the proſperity of the great houſe of God. Every believer is a temple of God, and the whole church is the great one. Is Chriſt ſet over the houſe of God as a great Prieſt; is his charge lying there? and ſhould not the care of our hearts go where Chriſt's charge is?

1*ſt*, Walk honourably, you that are the houſe of God: do not diſgrace and diſparage the temple of God: *Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy.* The true ſpring of true tenderneſs and holineſs in all manner of converſation, is the faith of thoſe privileges that by the grace of God we are poſſeſſed of.

2*dly*, You that are the houſe of God and believers, labour to bring in many to the ſame houſe with you. The leavening power of godlineſs is greatly gone: time hath been when it was otherwiſe, when the enemies took notice of it, that Chriſtianity was in a manner catching where-ever it came; that ſome Chriſtians, by their converſations and by their example, by their exhortations, and ſpeakings, and teachings of others, have been of great uſe to bring in many ſtrangers to the houſe. O that that were more minded!

Laſtly, Let us all pray more for the proſperity and increaſing of the houſe of God. There is room enough

nough in this houſe for Jew and Gentile. The great High Prieſt is able to take care of them all, and he will take care of all that are given him; they ſhall be ſpoke for, and brought in, in his time. So much now for this ſecond thing.

The *third* thing in the verſe, and which I would diſpatch alſo at this time, is the intereſt that the church hath in the High Prieſt: *Having an High Prieſt over the houſe of God.* Chriſt is the High Prieſt, the houſe of God is his charge, all his people have him; that is what the apoſtle ſpeaks. It is not, ſeeing there is an high prieſt, though that is ſomething; but it is an argument of far greater force, having him. But though the word *having* be not in the original here, it is neceſſarily underſtood from the 19th verſe, and is expreſſed, chap. iv. 14. That which I am to ſpeak to then is this, That the church of believers has a true and certain intereſt in and poſſeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, as their High Prieſt. I ſhall only ſpeak unto this, and then make application, What that intereſt is that believers have in Jeſus Chriſt as a High Prieſt, how far we may carry this word *having*.

1. We have this High Prieſt taken from amongſt men. He is a man as we are; he is one of our nature, though not of our condition. *Every high prieſt*, ſays the apoſtle, *is taken from amongſt men in things pertaining to God*, Heb. v. 1. So Jeſus Chriſt muſt be taken from among men.

2. We have this High Prieſt, as the Spirit of God calls it, with us: *He ſhall be called Emmanuel, God with us*, Matth. i. 23. taken from Iſa. vii. 14.; with us not only in the union of nature, but with us in another union, as he is our Lord, and head, as he is the head, and ſurety, and undertaker for his people.

3. We have him made, and framed, and ſhapen for us. What did Jeſus Chriſt do in the world, and what had he to do to be a High Prieſt, but only for his people? *In all things it behoved him to be like unto*

his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people, Heb. ii. 17. There is a greater word in Heb. vii. 26. *For ſuch an High Prieſt became us.* Pray what doth become us? Nothing doth become a ſinner, as a ſinner, but hell; that he deſerves, and that he is ripe for: but, ſays the apoſtle, *ſuch an High Prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens;* ſuch a High Prieſt became us. In the framing of our Lord Jeſus as a High Prieſt, and as a Mediator, the infinite wiſdom of God conſulted what was fit, and meet, and needful for poor men. Thereupon ſays the apoſtle, *He is made unto us of God, wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. So that if we muſt conceive, as indeed we muſt ſome way, of the works of God, according to the weak thought that we are capable of beſtowing upon them, the Father, in framing his Son Chriſt, conſidered what man needed; and whatever was needful, and wanting in them, as all good was, that Chriſt was made to be. If they are fools, he is made wiſdom; if they are guilty ſinners, he is made righteouſneſs; if they are defiled creatures, he is made ſanctification; if they be captives and ſlaves, he is made redemption.

4. We have him not only made thus, but ſent, ſent with the higheſt authority, coming in his Father's name; as he ſays himſelf, *I am come unto you in my Father's name;* he is conſecrated by the word of the oath for evermore, Heb. vii. 21, 28. This man is made a Prieſt by an oath, *by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.*

5. We have this Prieſt with the greateſt part of his work done already, and the reſt he is daily doing. The comfortable doctrine of Chriſt's prieſtly office was not ſo clearly known, until he had done the greateſt part of it. It is marvellous to think what dread-

ful

ful darkness was in the minds of believers before he died. Peter very readily saith, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*, Matth. xvi. 16. And the Lord owns him a blessed man for so saying, and tells him, that the Father had revealed this to him; that it was true faith he had, and that it was of a divine original; so that it was an infallible evidence, that the man was a believer: but as soon as Christ comes immediately after to preach to them the doctrine of his sufferings, that he was to be a sacrifice, and was to go up to Jerusalem, and there was to be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and to be slain, *Be it far from thee*, says Peter. Accordingly you know how sharply he was reproved by our Lord. But we need not aggravate the wickedness of that word of the good man; for their darkness was such that they commonly stumbled in these things grievously. What! speak against Christ's offering the grand sacrifice, by the virtue whereof Peter himself was to get eternal life! But so it was with him. But now we have this advantage, that the main, the hardest part of it is past: *We have a great High Priest*, saith the apostle, *the Son of God, that is passed into the heavens*. There were some that saw him upon the cross, that beheld our Lord in his agony, that saw him paying that price to divine justice, by the sacrifice of himself. *We see Jesus*, saith the apostle, *who was a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. As for his intercession, he is daily about it.

Lastly, Every true believer hath Jesus Christ given to him, and he is possessed of him, with all the virtues and benefits of his great office, the virtues of his sacrifice, and the benefits of his daily intercession; the virtue of that one offering, and the benefit of his interceeding before God, this is the proper and complete meaning of this word, *We have an High Priest;*

we have an intereſt in him, we have all the benefit of this great office the Father hath ſet him in.

Thus I have gone through theſe arguments of the apoſtle's. What follows in the following verſes, is the proper uſe the apoſtle makes of this doctrine; yet as I have, upon every one of the particular arguments and branches of them, made ſome little uſe thereof; ſo would I of this.

The only thing I would ſpeak to you about from this truth is, That ſince believers have Chriſt the High Prieſt, I would exhort you to try and ſee carefully whether you have him or no. That is a plain queſtion, Have you Chriſt or no? Chriſt ſaves none but them that have him: Chriſt ſaves no man at a diſtance; he enters into us, and we into him; and, if I may ſo ſpeak, we go to heaven together. The queſtion is this now, and it is a very plain one, and an important one; and it is a pity that the queſtion is not more frequently put, and ſeriouſly conſidered, and that there are ſo few can truly anſwer it, Whether you have Chriſt or no? I believe if there were one to ſtand at the door as you go out, and aſk every one this queſtion, whether you have Chriſt or no, there would be confounded anſwers. You can tell what you have, and what you want of worldly things; cannot you tell, whether you have Chriſt or no? The importance of this inquiry ſhould prompt you highly to the reſolution of it.

1. It is certain, that Jeſus Chriſt is come into the world, and did all his work he came for, and that he is gone to heaven, and is about that work he has there, and will quickly finiſh it, and return again: *Behold, I come quickly.*

The inference I draw from it, as to this queſtion, is, If Chriſt be certainly an High Prieſt of good things to come, it is mighty important for people to know, whether they have a ſpecial intereſt in him; for Chriſt's coming does not make it abſolutely neceſſary, that all that are in the world after his coming ſhould be

be in heaven; but multitudes perish, notwithstanding the light is come into the world, and many perish thereby, through the corruption of their hearts, refusing this tender of the grace of God.

2. It is certain, that you have heard of Jesus Christ as a great High Priest, and this is a great blessing that many want, and perish for the want of it. Now, to hear daily of Jesus Christ, and not to have him, is a grievous thing. The Lord has ways unknown to us to justify himself, when he shall judge the Heathen world: but the greatest judgment will be upon them that daily have heard of Christ, and never labour to get him.

3. There is more than that, it is sure that you have had the offer of him. The gospel is properly made up of two things, a declaring of what Christ is by the Father's appointment, and the tendering of him. As the Father hath made him unto sinners according to their need; so in preaching of the gospel, is the offering of Christ to all men. In all the preaching of the word that you hear, you never hear a word with one exception; you never hear our Lord commanding his servants to preach the gospel with any exception; but preach the gospel, and whoever believes and is baptized, shall be saved. The tender of Christ as a High Priest is a great matter. Now, to have Christ offered, and not to have him, is worse than not to hear of him, and not to have him. This gospel-offer of Jesus Christ is of that nature, that every thing in it, look on it which way you will, makes the sin of refusing him very dreadful; especially if we consider, who it is that makes the offer, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; all three are witnesses to it; and if we consider what that offer is, how great, how taking. Christ Jesus deals wonderfully with them he has a mind to save; Christ courts his bride, if I may so speak, always in his blood; and to a believer, Christ is never more beautiful, than when his garments are stained or adorned with his

own

own blood for our redemption. Chriſt is made a feaſt to us in his death: *Therefore let us keep that feaſt*, ſays the apoſtle; why, What feaſt? *Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. That perſon is in a very poor caſe, ſtark dead in ſin, and may be dead, and in hell within a little while, unleſs God prevent it by his grace, to whom Jeſus Chriſt was never beautiful in his bloody garments, in his working out eternal ſalvation for us. The offer is an offer alſo that is moſt fit and ſuitable for us. What can be more fit for them that cannot deal with God, and cannot bear God's dealing with them, than to have an High Prieſt that can undertake for both, that can ſpeak from God to us, ſo that we ſhall not be confounded, and carry our mind to God, ſo as we ſhall not be rejected? If God ſhould deal with us out of a mediator, we ſhould be confounded with his glory; and ſhould we deal with God out of a mediator, he would abhor us, and all our attempts, and all our ſervices.

Laſtly, It is certain, you all make profeſſion to have Chriſt. Pray take heed to this, that when you have the offer of the goſpel, and the offer of Chriſt in it, that you get the thing offered, that you have the thing you profeſs to have. Pray, what is the profeſſion of a Chriſtian? What is it to be a profeſſor of Chriſtianity? Is it to make parties in the church of Chriſt? We know a great many things a man may profeſs, but take the matter of Chriſtianity ſimply, What is it that man profeſſes? He profeſſeth he hath Chriſt. A Chriſtian without Chriſt is a monſter of hypocriſy, a piece of contradiction. Men muſt either make ſure, that they have Chriſt, or, I aſſure you, it were good manners for them to renounce the name of Chriſtianity. Why ſhould I be called a Chriſtian, and have not Jeſus Chriſt? The advantage of this reaſonable name is from the poſſeſſing the perſon. A Chriſtian is a man that hath, and is poſſeſſed of, and by Chriſt. How may one know, that he hath Chriſt as an High Prieſt?

Prieſt? I will name a few things concerning this, and they ſhall not be very hard nor very high.

1*ſt*, Do you love to have him? Do you look upon the poſſeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, as that part which would make you completely happy? Paul proved his ſincerity this way: *That I may win Chriſt*, ſays he, Why, had he not win him long ſince, and got him long ſince? Yes; but the man is for winning him ſtill, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Abraham's word has more goſpel in it, than a great many carnal profeſſors underſtand, Gen. xv. 2. When the Lord comforts him after the ſlaughter of the kings, *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward. Lord*, ſays Abraham, *what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* Pray obſerve, our Lord could give him ſafety from his enemies without children. Here lay the ſtreſs of the matter, the goſpel had been preached to Abraham before; as the apoſtle Paul tells us, Gal. iii. 8. and the goſpel that was preached to Abraham was this, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* Chriſt was preached to Abraham, as one that was to ſpring out of his loins. Now, *Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* It is like Abraham did not well know, how many generations the Meſſiah was to come after him; it may be he expected his coming ſooner than it was; like enough he knew it would be a good while: but here lay the grand trial of the man's faith; God hath promiſed, that in my ſeed all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed; the univerſal bleſſing upon poor man after ſin came into the world, is to come into the world by a certain one, that is to be born of my poſterity: this is that which Abraham had in his eye: Now, *Lord*, ſays he, *what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* In a manner the force lay here; Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go Chriſtleſs; where is the bleſſing of all the families of the earth? Sirs, if you can turn this now into the ſpiritual ſenſe of it, and your hearts can deal ſo with God, if the Lord ſhould

ſhould give you riches, and long life, and poſterity, and all the comforts of this life, Lord, what wilt thou give me, nay, what canſt thou give me, that can be a bleſſing to me, if I do not receive Jeſus Chriſt?

2*dly*, You may know, whether you have Chriſt or no by this; what is it that you are aiming at and catching at in the goſpel? I would fain know, what people come to hear for, what is the inward thought of your heart to this, and the other places? Is it, O that I may get hold of Jeſus Chriſt? If I may but lay hold of the ſkirt of this Jew, this great High Prieſt over the houſe of God, it is enough? Our work in hearing the goſpel, is to ſee if we can get hold of Chriſt Jeſus; he comes near to us in the word, and ſometimes comes ſo near, that a poor creature is enabled to get hold of him. Many ways do poor believers lay hold on Chriſt; he is only laid hold on by faith, but faith acts and works many ways; faith works many times ſtrong deſires; pantings and breathings after him, ſo frequently expreſſed by our Lord, by *hungering and thirſting after him;* but the proper meaning of this, is accepting Chriſt in the goſpel. Try yourſelves by it. Can you truſt Chriſt Jeſus this great High Prieſt with all your affairs? If you can truſt him, you have him, for he is poſſeſſed by truſting. When the matter of your eternal ſalvation is great in your eye, when you know the preciouſneſs of your immortal ſouls, when you ſee the multitude of thoſe ſins you have to anſwer for, and fear the ſtrength of corruption that is raging in you, and ſee the power of temptation that ſurrounds you; now, in all this, can you, with the heart, truſt this great High Prieſt that is ſet over the houſe of God, to caſt yourſelf alone upon him, and to ſeek no relief elſewhere, knowing that you need no more than what he is willing to give? Truſting in Chriſt Jeſus is a very deliberate act, and a very determinate act. That man that truſts in Chriſt Jeſus, can truſt in nothing elſe

else in that act wherewith he trusts him. People that are trifling, whose hearts are secure and carnal, can easily join these two together as they imagine; they can trust in Christ, and in themselves too. But it is impossible; trust must be always determined upon one single foot of account; it must be undivided. Certainly every man may know this easily, upon what account it is that he lodges that safety of soul. *I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.*

3*dly*, You may know if you have Christ by this, Hath he done any thing in you? We have not only a great High Priest for us, but this great High Priest does many things in us, and by that we know we have him. Whenever Christ comes to take possession of the heart, he does something in the heart that will easily make a difference betwixt Christ the new possessor, and the devil that was the old one. You will find that the savour of his sacrifice hath been powerful upon your hearts; you will find the benefit of his intercession has been many times perceived by you. Every child of God finds frequently experience of the thing. They many times pray and pray poorly, and are heard graciously; they wonder, they are surprised with mercies they did not look for; they admire whence they flow. Alas, the poor creature does not know that there is a great friend in heaven that remembers them, and these are the fruits of his remembrance.

Lastly, You may know if you have Christ thus; if you have daily work for him, you have him; for if you understand it rightly, it is a certain truth, that the employing of Christ is the possessing of him, the employing of him is the enjoying of him. It is impossible, that any can employ Christ in any part of his office, that has not Christ in that office really bestowed upon them. If therefore you have Christ, this will unavoidably be; you have an evidence, that you have him by this, that you have daily work for

this great High Prieſt, you need the ſprinkling of his blood for your daily tranſgreſſions, and need the efficacy of his grace for your daily wants. Never bid a worſe ſign for a man that has not Chriſt, than that he has no ſenſe of the want of him. He that has no work for Chriſt, is yet without God and Chriſt in the world; and a poor believer that groans in a ſenſe of his need of Chriſt, is oftentimes diſcouraged, when it ſhould be an argument of encouragement. Believers, if they be lively and growing, will find the univerſal ſenſe of all of them is; In truth I find I have far more need of Chriſt than I had twenty, thirty years ago. As his fulneſs is diſcovered, and our emptineſs diſcovered to us, our employing him does increaſe, as well as our enjoyment of him.

A LETTER

A

LETTER

FROM

The late REVEREND

MR. *ROBERT TRAILL*,

Minister at EDINBURGH.

TO HIS

WIFE;

AS ALSO

ONE to his CHILDREN.

Both Written by him in the time of his Banishment.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An ADVICE about some DUTIES.

Published at the Request of some Friends.

GLASGOW:

Printed and Sold by JOHN BRYCE, at his Shop,
opposite Gibson's-wynd, SALT-MARKET.

MDCCLXXV.

To the READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

BY this you may eaſily form a character of this good man: he was a faithful ſervant to his Maſter, and adhered to his Maſter's cauſe and intereſt with undaunted courage; as may appear by the many impriſonments and trials he endured, and at laſt a long and troubleſome baniſhment (a full account of which you have in Mr Wodrow's firſt volume of the hiſtory of the ſufferings of the church of Scotland, pag. 73, 146.) from all his near and dear relations, and eſpecially from his wife and children: but you ſee, his love to them made him not in the leaſt decline the ſuffering of this puniſhment (by pleading the removal of this cruel ſentence;) but he ſubmitted himſelf and family to God's providence; and although he was abſent from them, yet he had a great concern for them; you may ſee his concern for them was greater than for himſelf, as appears in the following letters. He never forgets them, but has a weighty concern for the ſalvation of their ſouls; it was the ſalvation of their ſouls he had moſt at heart, and not ſo much their welfare in this world. It is a very good example for every Chriſtian parent to copy after: and if parents were at more pains with their children, and more at the throne of God's grace for them when young, they would reap more the advantage of their pains when they are old. You have, at the end of the letters, a very good and ſeaſonable advice about ſome duties, written by his eldeſt ſon Mr William, who was miniſter at Borthwick, at the requeſt of a lady, for her own uſe; ſo, it is hoped, the publiſhing of it will do no harm, but good. It is begged of the reader, that the little eſcapes of wording or pointing may be paſſed over, ſeeing it is a fault very common to all poſthumous works, ſuch as theſe. That this may influence parents to be more concerned about their own ſouls, and the ſouls of their children; and that children may be ſtirred up by this to follow much of their parents counſels, is the earneſt deſire of thy ſoul's well-wiſher. Farewel.

A LET-

A

LETTER

FROM

The late REVEREND

Mr. ROBERT TRAILL

TO HIS

WIFE.

My dear and beloved Wife,

THE ſtorm has ſcattered our poor family and has driven me here to this ſtrange land; and new ſtorms ariſing do keep you that you cannot come to me here, and you know what hinders me from coming to you: but bleſſed be our Lord and our God, that we know that we may meet often before the throne in prayer and ſupplications one for another; and it is a mercy that we have yet leave to commune one with another in letters. I do often remember you, neither do I eat my ſolitary morſels without minding you, and thinks on the days when you and the children were about our table: but alas! the days of our liberty and peace were not improven by me as they ought and ſhould have been; and now all that I can do in that land of my exile, next unto prayer for you, is to write you at this diſtance. The Lord, whoſe gift a good wife is, did chooſe you for me, and has made you a mother of ſix children unto me, and has preſerved you to me a help and yoke-fellow unto this my old age, yea, has made you comfortable to me in my ſufferings to which he has called me. It has been no ſmall refreſhing to my ſpirit to think that you do chearfully, and I hope comfortably, bear the part of theſe croſſes which the Lord has laid upon me,

me. I am fully perſuaded, that if we can take any loſs that we have met with in the Lord's way, and for his honourable cauſe, joyfully and without murmuring, it ſhall turn to our good, and it ſhall well and abundantly be repaid by him, who gives the hundred fold even in this life, though with perſecution. Fret not againſt unjuſt men, who have driven me ſo far away from you; but pray for them, that the Lord may give them repentance to the acknowledging of his truth and of their own backſlidings from it. Ye know that they have done worſe to others than to me; princes have been hanged by their hands, and they have ſhed the precious blood of faithful witneſſes: and I am ſure you would rather have me in the baniſhment far from you, than to have had me at home with you as a Biſhop, or Dean, or time-ſerving Miniſter. The longer you live, ye ſhall the more clearly ſee the Lord's hand to be wiſe and good in all that has befallen us: I hope his thoughts toward us are peace, and not evil, to give us an unexpected end. O pray for yourſelf and for me, that he who has given us, upon the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe in him, but alſo to ſuffer for his name, would alſo give us grace that we may ſuffer chearfully, and would alſo carry us through cleanly and faithfully: he who hath called, yes, he who hath called us, alſo will do it. He ſends no man a warfare on his own charges, and he fits and furniſhes for ſuffering work, and bids us commit all the ſteps of our way unto the Captain of our ſalvation, even to Jeſus, who is the author and finiſher of our faith, *who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down on the right hand of the throne of God*, Hebrews xii. 2.

My dear wife, I intreat you to make your intereſt ſure in him. You ſee that this world is a changing, evil world, and they that are troubled about the many things in it, have much careful trouble and much toil in ſeeking them; and when they have gotten their portion

portion of them; they are not satisfied, neither taste of any true joy in the enjoying of them; and when they come to lose them, as sure they must at last, O what a disappointment do they meet with! and then they are as a dreaming hungry man that dreameth that he eateth, but when he awaketh his soul is empty, Isa. xxix. 8. but chuse you the good portion that shall not be taken from you, Luke x. 40, 41, 42. the world can neither give it nor take it away: it is the one thing needful; there is no more but to chuse it, and then it is yours, and is sure unto you; for your chusing of it is a sure and sweet evidence that the Lord has chosen it for you from all eternity, and therefore has made you to embrace his choice; for we have not chosen him first, but he has chosen us; because he has loved us with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness will he draw us: but we must take heed that the chusing of that good portion, even Christ, and grace, and glory, be serious, deliberate, and fixed; and therefore we would do well often to renew it in the Lord's presence in our most serious hours, and to have our souls oft saying to him, *Thou art my God and my portion, and therefore will I trust in thee*, Psal. xvi. 2. Lam. iii. 24. There is nothing worth our pains but this; for in having this, we have that which will satisfy the desires of the immortal soul, and which shall through all eternity be the matter of our eternal song and joy; and having this, we shall have all other things that the Lord thinks needful for us, while we are upon our way heavenward. My dear heart, make earnest of religion: the most part that are named Christians never make serious of Christianity; *to know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death*, Philip. iii. 8, 9, 10. This is a blessed and sublime study: the greatest divines cannot go above it, and yet the weakest believer is allowed to enter upon it in Christ's school with the learnedest; for it must be he that must be our teacher; yea,

yea, it is he that has made it one article of the well ordered covenant, that we shall be all taught of God, and shall all know him from the least to the greatest; and it is therefore the poorest and weakest seekers of him who are long at their A, B, C, and profess little; he casts none out that come to him, and enter themselves under his teaching, neither did he ever put any away because of ignorance or dulness of learning, and in conceiving the great mysteries of the kingdom: if he take us in hand, we shall learn and profit; and if we offer ourselves to be taught by him, he will take us in hand as we are, and will make us better. You and I have a fair opportunity now to grow in acquaintance with Christ, for he has allured us to the wilderness to speak comfortably to our hearts; he has made us pass under his rod, that he may bring us within the bond of the covenant; he has abridged us as to our former enjoyments in the things of this world, that we may learn better than ever we did before to be crucified to the world, and to have the world crucified to us; that we may understand experimentally what that lesson means which the apostle teaches us, 1 Corinth. vii. 30, 31. and that which Habakkuk won to, Hab. iii. 17, 18. Take courage, my dear heart: if our way be rough in our journey, and seemeth harder than it was, it is nearer to the end; there are not many steps to our journey's end; the Lord, our blessed and strong guide, lead us safely through the last step of it, through the dark valley of the shadow of death! If he be with us in that hour he shall enlighten our darkness, and we shall have a song in that night of the setting of the sun of this frail life, in hope of a fair morning and of an everlasting day. You and I could tell, if our memories could mind, and if our hearts were in a better frame to set them a-working to mention, the loving-kindness of the Lord, and much of his goodness and patience, whereby he has been following us all our life-time to this day:

day: we cannot but say, he has been doing us good and not evil all our days, though we have reputed him variable and very unkindly: he would take it very ill at our hand, if we should now come to call his love and kindness in question, after we have had so many years experience of it; let us rather labour to believe, that he who has very tenderly and abundantly cared for us from the womb to this day, will not now leave us or forsake us when old age hath overtaken us: he who made us a family as a flock, and kept house for us, and with us, for so many years, will not now cast off the care of us, when unjust men have scattered us, and yet he knows that they found nothing against us but in the matters of our God, and yet men would needs scatter us, because we would not yield to forsake our good Shepherd, who had laid down his life for us, (and follow idol-shepherds, who seek pleasure and not the well of the flock,) whose eye is upon us where-ever we be driven in this cloudy and dark day, and whose hand will gather us again from all places where we have been scattered, and will exactly reckon with those idol-shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock, and will bring a wo and curse upon them, Ezek. xxxiv. throughout. But if we were looking more to the Lord's just hand in all this that hath befallen us, we would not be discouraged: for albeit we may hold up our faces before men, and maintain our righteousness against them that have spoken evil against us, because we would not run on with them in the fearful backsliding, and because we would not say *a confederacy to all those to whom they said a confederacy*, neither would fear their fear, nor have any part with them who have robbed Christ of many of his royal prerogatives, to adorn poor dying, sinful clay with them; (but alas, both thieves and resetters must answer sadly for this highest sacrilege, in the day when our Lord shall come to reckon for all the wrongs that have been done against Zion, and against her King!) yet could we not

anſwer for one of a thouſand, if the Lord ſhould enter into judgment with us; for his hand is holy and juſt, even in that wherein mens hand is cruel and unjuſt; and that which is hard perſecution againſt us, as it is from man, is a fatherly and juſt chaſtiſement upon us as it is from God: and therefore our beſt courſe would be, to turn away our eyes from unjuſt perſecuting men towards the juſt correcting hand of God, and to ſay as it is Lam. iii. 39, 40. Did not our miſimproving of many days and years of proſperity juſtly deſerve and require ſome years of trouble? If he had not ſeen that we were in danger of ſettling upon our lees, he would not have thus poured us from veſſel to veſſel; had he not ſeen our droſs ſticking ſo faſt to us, we ſhould not have met with ſuch a hot furnace: but bleſſed be he who in faithfulneſs afflicts; who will not with-hold the rod, when ſparing of it would argue hatred to the child; who will not fail to ſet up his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jeruſalem, when he ſees that the ſons of love have ſuch need of purifying, and that unleſs the fire conſume our droſs, we are in danger ourſelves of being conſumed, Jer. ix. 9. The Lord brings it to that, that we may ſee, that as he has afflicted us in meaſure, and has not ſtirred up all his wrath againſt us, but in the day of his eaſt wind has ſtaid and reſtrained his rough wind; ſo we may in due time ſee, that by this the iniquity of Jacob ſhall be purged, and that this is all the fruit to take away ſin, Iſa. xxvii. 8, 9.

And now, fearing leſt I trouble you with ſo long a letter, I ſhall, in a few words, ſhew you what I mean.

1. I recommend to you, to acquaint yourſelf with the Lord, as he has revealed himſelf to you in his word, Job xxii. 21, 22. and ſeek his face in earneſt and fervent prayer; for a right ſeeking and patient waiting will do you much good, Luke xviii. 1,----9. Let the word of God dwell richly in you, and often look into that glaſs which will both give you a ſight of your

your own heart and ways, that you may lothe yourself: in them you see a sweet sight of Christ's kind heart towards humbled and mournful sinners, that you may love him, and seek to taste and see that he is good: and blessed are they that trust in him.

2. When now you are deprived of that large allowance of public ordinances which formerly you enjoyed, be much in secret duties; he can make this morsel, eaten in secret both sweet and strengthening unto you: next unto your bible, some good godly books, as worthy Mr Rutherfoord's letters, a book which has done much good unto some souls, and will do good to more, and that good little book of Mr William Guthrie's.

3. Have a care of the children, now, especially, I am so far removed from you and them: see what good you can do for their souls, in often praying for them, and admonishing them in the Lord, as you see their case doth require. You have some of them more ordinarily with you than the rest: let their time together be well improven. Have a care of Margaret your youngest daughter, whom the Lord keep with you now in your old age: warn her to seek the Lord early in the morning of her age; for those who seek him early shall find him: charge her to eschew the vanities and follies of a present evil world, and to walk and carry herself as becomes the daughter of a poor banished minister. I have some good hopes that the Lord who saved her from death here in Holland, and brought her safe home with you to the land where she was born, will glorify himself in his mercy and free grace toward her; the Lord grant that it may be so: I hope you and she both will join your Amen to this. You have your second son with you: he may be helpful to you and to the small remnant of that scattered family, that you have with you; and when his eldest brother shall return, he likewise will be helpful to you in family duties. I bless the Lord for them both, that he has begun to make himself known to

their souls, and to incline their hearts to seek him, and to cleave unto him in this backsliding time: the Lord encrease his grace in them, and keep them stedfast in nearer communion with himself.

4. Be not troubled with perplexing thoughts about the world: the meek in the earth are waxing nearer to an end; and you see no way, in human appearance, how their place shall be filled up again. Believe, that he that provides well for his own that trust and wait on him, will make, that the barrel of meal shall not waste, nor the oil in the cruse fail, until the day that the Lord send the rain upon that poor land, 1 Kings xvii. 14. Has he not promised that those who walk uprightly before him, and whose confidence is in him, shall *dwell on high: the places of defence shall be the munition of rocks, their bread shall be given them, their water shall be sure?* yea, your eyes shall yet see the King in his beauty, and ye shall yet again behold the land that for the present seems to be very far off. That scripture, Philip. iv. 6, 7. ought to be often and seriously meditated upon.

Lastly, I would entreat you, dear wife, to be much in chalking out, and trying your evidences for heaven, and often praying, that the Lord would write them clearly and distinctly on your heart, and would help you to read them, and to rejoice in them, or rather in him, who has made the purchase for you, and freely given you the evidence of it: he knows that it would be no small comfort in this my old age; and I am persuaded yet to hope to see you and the Lord's Jerusalem in that land in peace, before I see death. But this would much sweeten the delay, and this though it were till death, to have the lively hope that ye and I shall enjoy the Jerusalem that is above, where righteousness and peace dwell, and where no storm can come to scatter us again. Pray, pray for this to you and me, yea, and for all the children the Lord has given us. Sure I am there is room enough for

for us all there. O let us run to him who has gone thither to prepare manſions for all whom the Father has given to him in the eternal decree of election, and for whom he has laid down his life as a price for our redemption! And we cannot better know that (even we, poor ſinful wretched) we are of the bleſſed number, than by our coming to him to ſeek and find ſalvation in him, who has paſſed his word, yea, his oath on it, that he will caſt none out that come to him; and he is a King of his word, and will not fail to perform what he has promiſed. Let us grip to theſe immutable things, his word and his oath, in which it is impoſſible for him to lie, that we may have ſtrong conſolation, when we flee for refuge to the hope ſet before us. Now, I leave this on you; lay hold upon him who has tenderly cared for me all my lifetime, and has been in a ſpecial manner kind to me in this place of my exile, giving me now and then ſweet feaſts in this wilderneſs, for which I deſire you may bleſs him: and caſt all your cares upon him, for he will care for you: he is my God, and will be the God of my relations after me; and when I come to fall aſleep, and to be taken off the ſtage, I hope there ſhall be a family ſerving the Lord in their generation better than ever I did in mine; himſelf grant that it may be ſo! The abundant grace of our Lord, and the ſweet conſolation of his bleſſed Spirit, be with you, my dear heart, and with the ſix children, and with the eldeſt daughter's children and husband. This is the frequent and fervent prayer of your loving husband,

ROBERT TRAILL.

A LET-

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LETTER

FROM A

FATHER TO HIS CHILDREN, &c.

[Rotterdam, March 1665.]

Dear Children, whom the Lord my God has graciously given me,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I HAVE often, in this time of my exile, had many earnest wishes for your eternal salvation, and some weak prayers to the hearer of prayer, for all of you, that ye may be saved from the wrath to come, and may, in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, be owned of him, set on his right hand, and taken in to dwell with him for ever; that ye be of the blessed number of these of whom he will be admired, and in whom he shall be glorified, *in that day, when he shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Thess i. 7, 8, 9, 10. and that poor, wretched, unprofitable I may have to say in that day, *Behold me, and the children thou hast given me*, which were for a while for signs and wonders in the world, and now are for signs and wonders of thy rich mercy, and free undeserved grace. The Lord hath often put it into my heart, to write unto you all in one letter, that I may stir you up to the serious and frequent thoughts of that which is your greatest concernment, even your eternal salvation; that ye may make that your main task, *to work out your salvation in fear and trembling*; and, for that end, *to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; but an entrance shall be administred to you abundantly, into*

into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Peter i. 10, 11. There are three things mainly that have made me thus to write unto you. *1st*, Because this is a duty lyes upon Christian parents. The Lord did shew unto Abraham, the father of the faithful, that he expected this at his hand, in reference to his relations, Gen. xvii. 19. *For I know that he will command his children and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, &c. And the Spirit of God in the new testament, does much press this duty. *2dly*, Because my obligations to Christ, and to his free grace, are so many, and so great, that, had I never so many children, I would think myself bound, to the utmost of my power, to consecrate them all to him; and to press upon them, by all that love could suggest unto me, that they would serve the Lord God of their father. *3dly*, Because among the many other challenges I have now in my solitary hours, in this house of my pilgrimage, for neglect of duties in my days of peace, this is one, that I did not improve my time aright, *when the candle of the Lord did shine upon my tabernacle*, and ye were as olive plants about my table. Alas! I did not press upon you, as I ought and might, the serious thoughts of eternity, and of your souls salvation; and therefore I am the more obliged now to do it, at this distance; and who knows but it may sink deeper into your hearts, that it comes thus by a letter from an aged, banished father? I remember that I was often moved, in prayer with that family over which the Lord had set me, to pray for preparation against a time of scattering, though I did not then think that it should have been such, and so far off, before death; but now it is come, and that which death will make is following: the Lord give us the sanctified use of the one, and serious preparation for the other. *4thly*, Because I am under the bond of a promise and vow to the Most High God, taken on, before him, and unto him, at your baptism, that I should endeavour to train you up for himself, that ye might

might learn to know, fear, and ſerve him. I remember, I preſented every one of you to that ſacrament, except one who was preſented, in my abſence, by a faithful and worthy miniſter, who is now at his reſt, and who doubtleſs did pray for the bleſſing and fruit of that ordinance unto the child he did preſent; and, I hope, his prayer was heard; and that the Lord, who has choſen for her a good husband, and made her the mother of children, ſhall own her as one of the daughters of Zion, who ſhall be found in the regiſter of theſe of whom it is written, They were born there, by the new and better birth. Yea, the Lord has been graciouſly pleaſed to let me live ſo long with you, till I have entered all of you (except the youngeſt, who, I hope, ſhall not want his part of the covenant bleſſing) unto that other ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, that ſo you might therein, by your own proper act and deed, make an open and avowed reſignation of yourſelves to the Lord, *as your God, and your father's God*, and declare before the world, that in him alone ye have ſalvation, and that ye will live and die to him; and ſo might perform what was promiſed for you by your parents in that firſt ſacrament, when you could not reſtipulate by yourſelves, but behoved to do it by another, till ye ſhould come to the years of knowledge, that ye might then give your own actual and formal conſent; which, I hope, ye have done, as often as ye have been partakers of that other ſacrament. *5thly*, Becauſe the Lord has made me, again and again, in this my Patmos, to cry unto him, more than ever before, for grace and glory to myſelf, and to my ſeed; and to lay out before him that ſweet and large promiſe, Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayſt live;* yea, now and then to act faith and to pray upon it, and to win unto ſome hopes that it ſhall be made good for all of you. Sure I am, there is room enough for all of you in heaven, were ye more than ye are: there is mercy

and

and grace enough in Jesus Christ, to bring you thither; and nothing can keep you out, but unwillingness to enter in by him, who is *the way, the truth, and the life*, and who makes it one of his greatest complaints against perishing sinners, that they *will not come unto him, that they may have life*. And the *6th* and last thing, that hath moved me to scribble these lines, is, That the few and evil days of my pilgrimage are fast wearing to an end, the shadows of the evening are stretched out, and my sun is near the setting, neither know I, if I shall see you any more in a present world: and therefore, while the Lord lets me yet dwell in this frail tabernacle, I would desire to mind you of these things which concern your eternal peace; and that ye may remember these things, when I shall be no more within time, either to speak or write to you. Now all that I shall recommend to you, I shall sum up into these few heads: *First*, and chiefly, There are some things I would press upon you, in reference to your seeking the Lord, and serving him in your generations, *that ye may be saved in the day of the Lord*. *Secondly*, Some things in reference to your natural relations. *Thirdly*, Some things in reference to the times wherein the Lord has cast your lot to live.

1. For the *first*, Make it your daily task, to seek the Lord and his face, and to serve him with all your heart, as your God, and your father's God: and O that you and I could exalt him; and that he would prepare for himself an habitation in my heart, and in the heart of every one of you! Read the scriptures frequently and seriously; meditate upon them, and pray upon them, 1. For grace to obey the precepts there set down, for you. 2 For hearts to tremble at the threatnings that sound there, that ye may escape the dint of them, and may, by your flying into Christ, be kept from the fearful execution of them, which will certainly pass upon all the children of disobedience. 3. Pray for faith to believe all the great and precious promises that are breathed out there, *that ye may by these be made partakers*

kers of the divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, 2 Pet. i. 4. *and that having these promises,* ye may by them (both as motives to persuade, and as means to help and enable you) *purify yourselves from all filthiness, both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,* 2 Cor. vii. 1. *and that ye may be heirs of these exceeding great and precious promises, through Jesus Christ, in whom they are all yea and amen.* 4. Pray for wisdom to look aright upon and consider the examples of the saints recorded in scripture, both in their failings and falls; that ye may be brought to ply your course circumspectly, and with fear, eschewing these; for they are set up as beacons, to warn these that sail through the same sea, to beware of the rocks on which they did strike, and suffered loss, though they were saved from drowning by the skill and care of their blessed Pilot, who brought them in at last, as ship-broken passengers, to their safe and quiet haven: and also in their virtues, and holy walking before the Lord, in their generations; *that ye may in these be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises,* Heb. vi. 12. *and that, being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, ye may lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you, and may run with patience the race that is set before you,* Heb. xii. 1. And as I do recommend unto you frequent and fervent prayer, so I would have you not to forget, or neglect praising, I mean, singing of psalms, even in your secret worship; but remember to *sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also:* this is one main part of our immediate worship, and shall continue through all eternity, when all mediate worship shall cease. Ye may perform this sweet part of worship, even in secret, without letting your voice be heard by others, who possibly may be in places or rooms near you. And then when you have been at the throne, and have presented yourselves and your supplications unto him who sits thereon, then look up, and expect your answer from the hearer of prayer, and through

through his merits and mediation, who has a *censer, and much incense is given to him, that he may offer it with* (or, as it may be read, that he may give or add to it) *the prayers of all saints*, Rev. viii. 3. But, while ye wait for an answer, and look up, do not set a time to him; *for sure he will make the vision to speak*, and the promise, on which ye pray, to be fulfilled in the due and best time; and therefore wait for it, even when ye think it tarrieth long; for ye have his word for it, *that it shall come, and shall not tarry*, Hab. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And tho' ye cannot be always on your knees in prayer, neither is this required of you; yet know, there it a way to entertain communion and fellowship with God all the day long, and to give him the constant service of the affections of your hearts, and to be sending and darting up frequent ejaculations unto him, in whatever company you be, whatever ye be looking on and speaking of. We know how it was with honest Nehemiah, chap. ii. 4. *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.* This were to *set the Lord always before your eyes;* this were to *walk with God*, and to be *in the fear of the Lord all the day long;* and so, when death should come, ye should but change your place, and not your best company.

II. That which I would recommend to you, in reference to your natural relations, is, 1. In reference to your mother: I charge you be kind to her, now when she is come to her old age; and be helpful and comfortable unto her, as the Lord shall enable. Probably she will live longer with you than I shall; and I pray the Lord that it may be so. She hath been a kind and dutiful wife unto me, and comfortable to me in the time of my sufferings; and the Lord will bless her, even for that. She has been a very tender and dutiful mother to all of you: in her womb were you conceived, and in pains did she bring you forth into the world, and nourished you on her breasts; and since that time to this, her care towards you has been very

tender and great; and the Lord both craves and expects a kind requital. 2. In reference to yourselves, as brethren and sisters brought up in one family, tho' now scattered. O love one another in the Lord, *and fall not out by the way;* but be helpful one to another, especially as to your souls concern. Pray one for another, and, as occasion offers, one with another: and ye, who are elder, have a care to bestow a word of admonition upon the younger; especially forget not your younger brother; ye who are his elder brethren, give him warning to beware of the evils of the time wherein his lot is cast, and of the sinful city he lives in; but, above all, to beware of the evils of his own heart. Recommend unto him that scripture, (which I hope ye recommend to yourselves), Psalm cxix. 9. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? but by taking heed thereto according to thy word*, Eccl. xii. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* He bears the name of his grandfather, who was no scholar, and yet a man well acquainted with God, and much exercised in the scriptures, and in prayer, and on Christ's side, in the controversies of Zion, under the former Prelates: he would never countenance any of them, albeit he had natural relations to some of them: he did towards his end give testimony against the usurpation used by these men upon the congregation where he lived, and whereof he was an elder: and so after, and through manifold temptations and afflictions, he entered into the kingdom of God, and died in the assured hope of the blessed days of reformation, which we should see, and which we did see. But alas! our unthankfulness for these days, and our many provocations against the Lord, have brought a sad change. The Lord grant, that, as that young man bears his name, so he may learn to live and walk in the good old way wherein he walked, that he may find rest to his soul.

III. There are some things I would recommend to you, in reference to the present times into which your lot is cast to live. And, 1. Beg of the Lord wisdom

to

to discern the times, and to know *what Israel ought to do.* 2. Keep yourselves from the evils of the times; for they are evil days, wherein even the elect are in danger of being deceived: *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to reprove them rather*, Eph. v. 11. *And beware lest ye also be led away with the errors of the wicked, and so fall from your own stedfastness: but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18. Pray to be kept from the way of those who are turned aside from the good old way, wherein some time they walked; and wherein they promised to themselves, and avowed and professed before others, that they should find rest to their souls: yea, and some preached this before many witnesses; but now they seek their rest in other paths, which the Lord has cursed, and which he will yet again curse. Be not sharers with these men in their sins, that ye may not be partakers of their judgments; for their judgment sleepeth not, but is as fast hastening as they are ripening for it, and that is fast enough. 3. Labour to be marked among the mourners in Jerusalem, *who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof*, Ezek. ix. 4. O beware of being reckoned in the number of those who eat and drink, *and are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph;* or of those who make merry in their sensual delights, in a day and time when the Lord is *calling to mourning and weeping, and fasting;* against whom a wo is denounced, *and whose iniquities shall not be purged away till they die.* Amos vi. 1. *Wo to them that are at ease in Zion.* And Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 14. *And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying of oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.* Mourn for the blood

blood of the bleſſed martyrs, that has been ſhed in that great, but ſinful city; and bleſs the Lord, who gave to thoſe faithful and valiant witneſſes to offer their blood ſo willingly, for ſealing theſe ſure truths, that are now oppoſed by a gainſaying generation; and for aſſerting the royal prerogative of Zion's King, who will take no laws of dying kings, whoſe breath ſoon goes out, and in that hour all their thoughts periſh with them. Let the two precious heads that are ſet on the Netherbow, but ſhall be ſeen in the great day, with crowns upon them; yea, their adverſaries muſt ſee them amongſt theſe whom the king will honour; let, I ſay, the heads of theſe faithful witneſſes (*who, being dead, yet ſpeak*) mind you, and ſtir you up to cry, as the ſouls under the altar do, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not avenge the blood of thy ſervants on them that dwell on the earth?* Rev. vi. 10. 4. I would recommend unto you, my two eldeſt ſons, who were entring upon your trials for the preaching of the goſpel, when the ſtorm aroſe which razed presbyteries, (but their foundation cannot be razed, *for it is built upon the rock of ages, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall not prevail;*) let not this ſtorm ſhake you, or make you quit your purpoſe. You were minting to fit yourſelves for putting your hand to that plough, when the Lord ſhould give you a call; and therefore look not back, but purſue your purpoſe; and, by the Lord's grace, and his ſtrength, be diligent in the uſe of all means, whereby ye may be fitted for that high and holy calling; and poſſibly the Lord of the vineyard ſhall call you, among others, to work in his vineyard in that poor land, when he ſhall have driven out theſe wild boars, which have laid it waſte for a while. The Lord knows, that as it would be a great part of my joy, to ſee all my children walking in the truth; ſo would it be ſome further degree of my joy, to ſee you two honoured of the Lord, to be preachers of the truth. I mean, faithful, and not time-ſerving preachers, entring by the door, and not climbing up ſome other

ther way. The Lord can do it, and, if he see it fit for his own glory, he will do it; and on these terms allenarly do I, and should ye seek it.

Lastly, I would recommend to all of you, both sons and daughters, and that, in this backsliding time, *when so many are turning back from Christ, and walking no more with him*, ye would strengthen your resolution not to leave him; for *to whom should ye go, in turning away from him, seeing he only has the words of eternal life?* John vi. 66, 67, 68. *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? then said Simon Peter unto him, Lord, to whom shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life. Say ye not, A confederacy to all those to whom this apostate generation say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid: but sanctify the Lord God of hosts in your hearts, and let him be your fear and your dread*, Isa. viii. 12, 13. The Lord himself speaks in this to your hearts and mine, with a strong hand, instructing us. Now, I conceive, that this would much conduce to help you to stedfastness in a backsliding time, often to make actual resignation of yourselves to the Lord, I mean, on your knees in prayer, humble and hearty prayer; to give up yourselves, sou's and bodies to him, who is your Lord, Creator and Redeemer, who has bought you by a dear price, that ye should be his, *and that ye should live to him, and not to yourselves.* This actual resigning yourselves to him, and explicite and formal covenanting with him, would please him well, would give the devil and your own corruptions a great dash, and would make you understand some scriptures more clearly and more comfortably; as Psal. xvi. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee.* Psal. xxvii. 8. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* Jer. xxx. 21, 22. *And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near,*

and

and he shall approach unto me: For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God, Zech. xiii. 9. *They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* But of this worthy and stedfast Mr William Guthrie has written well; which little great book I recommend to all of you. And now, my dear children, whose everlasting salvation my soul prays for, and desires to believe, and whose holy and Christian conversation, in the way thither, I earnestly beg, meditate often on that scripture, Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And pray for grace to obey that great and excellent gospel lesson, *that ye may assure your hearts before him, and that it may be well with you in the great day of the Lord.* And shall I mention to you what worthy Mr Bolton said on his death-bed to his children? (I hope, the mentioning of it shall do you no harm, but good) *I charge you,* said he, *O my children, not to meet me in the great day, in a Christless, graceless condition!* I hope, every one of you will endeavour, and make it your main study and care, to be found in Christ in that day, *not having your own righteousness, but that which is through faith in him.* The Lord himself grant that it may be so; *and the Lord God, my God, and my father's God, who has fed me, and provided for me all my life long until this day, and the great Angel of the covenant, which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, and lasses also.* And so I recommend you to him, as your God all-sufficient, *and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them*

them that are sanctified through faith that is in him. And now the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God, *that your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it.* Children, pray for me, your aged father, who desires to live and die in the hope, that we shall, with joy, meet before the throne; and that ye take these lines, as some weak help to carry you thither. They are from,

Your loving and affectionate father,

ROBERT TRAILL.

P. S. I would desire, that ye would choose some convenient day, when all of you may meet together, and have this read amongst you, with earnest prayer to God for his blessing upon it, and for mercy and grace to him who wrote it, and is now at such a distance from you; and then let every one of you have a copy of it, to keep beside you, as the best love-token I can send you. *Grace, grace, rich and free grace be the portion of every one of you;* and then are ye rich enough. Let me have an answer from you, subscribed by all your hands, that I may know how you accept of this counsel, and what your purpose is of hearkening unto it, and following it in the Lord's strength; and I shall carefully keep it by me, and shall present it before the Lord, by prayer to him, who must work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, that he may give you to work out your salvation in fear and trembling.

A necessary and excellent

ADVICE ABOUT SOME DUTIES.

I. *As to worship.*

1. FREQUENCY in essays of worship and duty seems to be more useful and edifying, than the lengthening out of these duties, or spending much time at once in any of them, except upon extraordi-

nary cafes and occafions; and frequency in thefe duties comes alfo neareft the fcripture rule, and fcripture precept, Pfalm lv. 17. *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I praife, and cry aloud*, Pfalm cxix. 164. where the Pfalmift is found to pray feven times a day; and it is to be fuppofed, that Chriftians who are much alone, and whofe time and affairs permit, do ufually pray much oftener than feven times a day. When you get an hour or two for fecret duties, it is better to pray three or four times during that fpace, than to fpend it all in one addrefs, without intermiffion, or intermixing of other duties with it.

2. In fecret, let reading, efpecially of the fcriptures, and meditation, be intermixed with your effays of prayer.

3. In fecret, make ufe of your voice fo high, and fo low, as you find, by experience, doth moft conduce to the help and furtherance of ferioufnefs, fervency, livelinefs, attention, and fixednefs of heart and mind, in oppofition to vain, wandring thoughts and impertinencies.

4. Secrecy, and preventing your being overheard, and the fhew and appearance of oftentation.

5. Reverence the fovereign, unfearchable, holy, and wife providence of God, in granting you liberty to pray, fometimes for one thing, fometimes for another, and fometimes, it may be for a long time, not granting you liberty to pray for that fame thing that you would faineft be at. For we cannot, when we pleafe, command liberty in prayer; nor have we any power over ourfelves, to feek fpiritually and fervently, even that which we would fain have, Rom. vii. And this may let us fee a vaft difference between natural, fpiritual and gracious defires after the fame thing.

6. Stumble not, nor entertain harfh thoughts of God, if you get liberty in prayer for a thing, with faith, fervency and fubmiffion, and yet be denied that thing, which you were helped more than ordinary to feek; for thefe prayers are heard and accepted, though the thing

be not granted. So it was with Christ himself, Heb. ii. 9. Matth. xxvi. 39. *O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

7. When ye cannot get liberty to pray for yourselves, nor for others, nor for the public and general concerns of the gospel and people of God, nor for any thing, then try confession of sin, and renewing of repentance: try thanksgiving and praises for what you have got of late and of old, and for the many good things you presently possess, and for what spiritual blessings you enjoy beyond many about you, and for what liberty you have had at any time formerly. Praise and thanksgiving sometimes prove a mean of enlargement, and loosing of bonds. Also observe, improve, and take hold of providential calls, and seasons of secret prayer, besides your ordinary times for it, such as those: immediately after prayer with others, either in public or in private, then go to your closet, if opportunity be given: also when you are in any commotion, or disturbance of passion, through sudden anger, fear, grief, or joy, unexpected or surprising accidents, crosses, *&c.* then essay to compose your heart, by venting it to God, and breathing out to him in prayer; likewise, after the commission or first discovery of some fresh sin and guilt; again, immediately before you enter upon any business of weight or moment: likewise, all your duties of worship are to be begun and closed with secret prayer. Again, when ye get any liberty, or loosing of heart, bless and praise him for it, both before you leave the duty, and also when you make your next address to him, for what you got when you were last before him. Again, though you get neither sensible access, nor desirable returns of prayer, yet you ought to be encouraged in the faith of that great truth, *That he hath not bidden the seed of Jacob seek his face in vain,* Isa. xlv. 19. And if it is ill with you, as it is, you may be sure it would be much worse with you, if duties of worship were slighted.

II. *As to your caſe and frame.*

1. LABOUR to get out of your ſoul's trouble, not ſo much becauſe it is terrible to you, as becauſe it is ſinful, and oppoſite to faith, and almoſt all other duties, John xiv. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Yet it muſt be granted, that it is the uſual ſpot of the children of God; and that is a more kindly and hopeful token, to have a little too much of this, than to have nothing of it at all, Pſalm lxxiii. 14. *All the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning*, Pſalm lv. 5. Labour for much eſtabliſhment of the heart by grace, and for an equal conſtant frame of ſpirit, that you may not be ſoon caſt down, nor raſhly frighted with every unexpected thing, and often put out of frame, and have ſo many ups and downs, like the legs of the lame. Prov. xxvi. 7. *The legs of the lame are not equal.* Heb. xiii. 9. *It is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed by grace;* and many other places. Labour much for *the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price*, 1 Peter iii. 34. and alſo very favoury to our neighbours. And alſo, guard againſt all paſſion, either ſpeaking or doing any thing in your haſte; and eſpecially againſt the ſudden venting of your paſſion: if at any time you be overtaken with it, do but think a while upon the thing that vexes you, before you tell your mind about it: and when at length you muſt ſpeak, yet, even then, ſpeak leſs than you think; ſpeak not all the worſt of it, for that would but inflame the heart more than it was before. Prov. xxix. 11. *A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wiſe man keepeth it in till afterwards*, Prov. xvi. 23. *The heart of the wiſe teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.* Learn to put a favourable and hopeful conſtruction upon the providences of God towards you, and even upon thoſe that are dark, ſad, and diſmal-like: and do not carry like one that is jealous of his kindneſs; and do not think, that, in every croſs

cross dispensation, he is seeking advantage of you, and, as it were, laying a snare for you; but rather, if a dispensation be liable to tentation and different constructions, whereof nine are bad, and but one of them good, let the praying believer reject and leave the nine bad interpretations, and put only the good and favourable sense upon that sad dispensation: for it well becomes him, and it is his duty and wisdom so to do; and, with the scripture warrant, Mark vii. and last, *He hath done all things well.* Rom. viii. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God.* Psalm xxv. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth,* &c. and in many other places. Again, in the trial of your case, and sincerity of your faith, love, and of the rest of the graces; I say, in the examination of them before God, mind the differences mentioned between the marks of strong faith, and the marks of true faith, though weak.

2. Often and seriously put your heart in his hand, and pray, that he would not suffer you to provoke him, nor deceive yourself, in your trial, and judging of your case, Psalm cxxix. 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart.* And Psalm xxvi. 1. *Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity.*

3. When the trial proves dark and difficult, and ye know not what to think of your case, being so confused; then put off intricate questions about your sincerity in former times, and set about the direct acts of faith, which stand in the outgoings of the soul towards Jesus Christ, and chusing and cleaving to him, as a full, sufficient and only Saviour of poor lost sinners; which supposes an heart-humbling and exercising sense and feeling of your sinfulness and misery.

4. Beg that promised spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Now have we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God.* Lay your account with many ups and downs in the case; for they are useful, needful, profitable, and kindly to saints, in their voyage

voyage to the land of reſt: and we cannot well bear conſtant fair weather, but muſt ſometimes have ſtorms and croſs winds, and ſometimes gales of favourable and fair winds; and all is made *through prayer, and ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus*, Philip. i. 19. to contribute for the furtherance of their voyage heaven-ward, and giving them more and freſh diſcoveries of the working of ſanctifying and ſaving grace in the hearts of his people, and ſoul-refreſhing exerciſes, that are ſuitable for a militant chriſtian in this world.

III. *As to practices of duty.*

1. OFTEN mind what is your daily croſs, Heb. xii. 2. that you may take it up, and follow Chriſt, bearing it, and from time to time taking a freſh lift of it.

2. Deſiring and endeavouring to do all in faith, depending upon God in Chriſt, (*leaning upon him while ye walk through the wilderneſs of this world*, Cant. viii. 5) for furniture and through-bearing in all the caſes you can be in.

3. For acceptance of you and your eſſays of duty, of ſucceſs of duty, and growth therein, of holineſs, and nearneſs to God thereby

4. Of a reward and bleſſing, that it ſhall not be in vain, Iſa. xlv 19. *I ſaid not unto the ſeed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.* 1 Tim. iv. 8. *Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſes of the life to come, and that which is now.* Alſo, you muſt be preſſing forward daily, to know more of the power, life, and ſpirit of every duty, and ſtill to be going on from ſtrength to ſtrength; unto which progreſs, the wiſe obſervation of our ſhort-comings doth daily help.

5. Keep your eye much upon your predominants, and upon the *ſin that doth moſt eaſily beſet and overthrow you;* for theſe may be the Captain of your ſoul's enemies. More particularly, enquire whether any of theſe

these prevail over you, *viz.* doubting, misbelief, and calling almost all truths to question. 2*dly*, God-provoking and self-disquieting jealousy of his love to you, notwithstanding of his multiplied evidences of the care of your soul. 3*dly*, Tormenting diffidence, impatient haste, rash censuring of others, and hasty venting of your thoughts when you are vexed: it is better to vent your heart to God in prayer, which is the breathing of the soul; and then, as you see fit, to vent yourself to your fellow-creatures. 4*thly*, Mind the proper season for every duty; and learn daily more of that great duty of redeeming time, Eph. v. 16. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* 5*thly*, Whatever you think Christ would have done, in such a particular case, when he was upon earth, do you the same. This may be a direction in very dark and doubtful cases, and it is commanded in the imitating of Christ, 1 Peter i. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* 1 John iv. 17. *Because as he is, so are we in this world,* 1 Cor. xii. 11. *But all these worketh that one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally,* as he will. Mind that general rule, Matt. vii. 12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,* &c. with its due limitations.

6. Learn to keep in mind your latter end; and be dying daily, by constant essays of that precept, 1 Tim. vi. 19. *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;* by diligence in the great duty of Christianity, by labouring to grow daily in grace, and by adventuring on nothing but what is duty, both lawful and seasonable, and as you think you would adventure upon, if you had but a day to live. Improve your sense of short-coming, not for discouraging you from or in duties, but for stirring you up to more diligence and watchfulness.

IV. *As*

IV. *As to your converſe with others.*

1. MIND what was formerly hinted, of ſpeaking within bounds; which ſeems to be the ſcripture rule, Prov. xvii. 27. *He that hath knowledge, ſpareth his words*, &c. and many other places.

2. Study to be both doing good, and getting good in every company; let all be for edification, otherwiſe you will be getting hurt, or at leaſt loſing your time, and falling behind in your great work.

3. Let your viſits be moſt to the godly. Prov. xiii. 20. *He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be made wiſe*, &c. Yet not only to thoſe; Prov. xviii. 24. *A man that hath friends, muſt ſhew himſelf friendly*, &c. 1 Cor. v, 10. *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world*, &c.

4. When you give any viſit, make it ſhort, except the company be very good, and their diſcourſe edifying.

5. When you receive a viſit, rather lead the diſcourſe, by propoſing ſome pertinent purpoſe, than loſe the time by idle, vain, and unprofitable converſe; and the more ſerious and ſpiritual your diſcourſe be, you will be the ſooner quit of their company, if they be carnal, and they will the ſeldomer return to trouble you: yet be not behind the worſt of them in common civility and neighbouring kind offices.

6. Let the diſcourſe be led, by talking of remarkable providences or queſtions ſuitable to the company you converſe with. There are many innocent wiles of ſhortning unprofitable company; in the uſe whereof prudence is needful, and wiſdom is profitable to direct; ſo there is need of watchfulneſs and reſolution, to make them effectual with little obſervation.

At Borthwick, December 12th, 1708.

F I N I S.

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